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July 2015



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BETH SINGER

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editor's note

Expect the best



AT CONSUMER REPORTS

we talk a lot about the best products for your home, the best ways to save, and the best decisions. But what does the “best” really mean—and who are we to tell you, anyway? Those are fair questions. And the answers are in CR’s unique approach to eval-

uating everything you need for your new kitchen, from juicers to ranges to appliance retailers.

You see, we’re not making subjective recommendations based on our own tastes, what’s hot in the market, or advertiser alliances. Instead, we rely on our team of pros—engineers who run exhaustive tests on every aspect of the products that appear in our Ratings, and editors who turn a real-world eye to the latest trends—to deliver objective judgments about the best and worst products in every category.

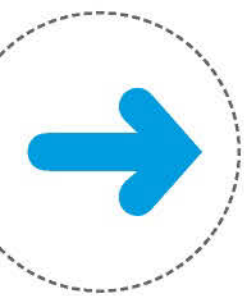
Our independent evaluations of more than 800 products reveal the truth about performance, features, capacity, and more. You can trust our reports because we buy everything we test and accept no ads—so our testers can tell it like it is. And, our brand-reliability surveys of tens of thousands of Consumer Reports subscribers reveal the brands most likely to last—so you won’t get stuck footing the bill for expensive repairs.

Appliances that boast excellent performance and last for years, surfaces that stand up to daily use and abuse, flooring and fixtures you can depend on: We believe you should expect the best. And we promise to help you find it.



Buy the best: classic cabinets, durable surfaces, and easy-care fittings.

Amanda Lecky
Special Publications Editor



Hot list

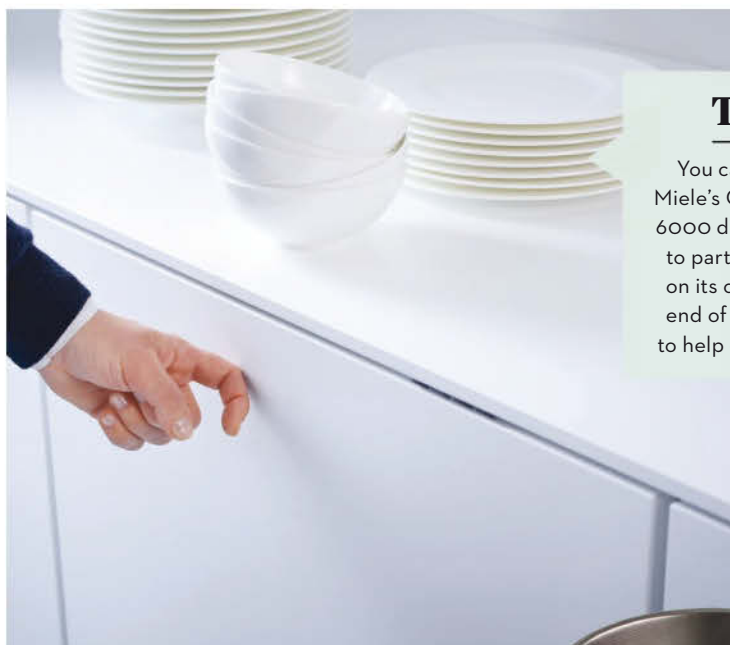
Our experts' takes on the best—and worst—of what's new in the kitchen

5 trends worth trying

Consumer Reports' team of experts was on hand at the biggest kitchen-industry trade shows to record the newest trends and coolest products. If you're planning to remodel or just curious about the latest and greatest, here's a look at what's new on the home front.

1 No more handles

The contemporary look that's all the rage right now has given rise to what we're calling the handle-less kitchen. Manufacturers are using various innovations to eliminate handles and pulls from appliances, cabinetry, and fixtures for some of the most streamlined designs we've seen. Miele's Generation 6000 line of dishwashers, for example, uses **"Knock2Open" technology**. Instead of reaching for a lever, you simply knock twice and the dishwasher door swings open. But you still have to close it by hand.



Tip

You can program Miele's Generation 6000 dishwashers to partially open on its own at the end of the cycle, to help dishes dry.

A thermometer gauges the water bath's temperature, holding even conditions over a long time.



2 Custom options

Personalization was among the shows' biggest buzzwords. Case in point: ovens and pro-style ranges that can be finished in **the color of your choice**. We also liked **Frigidaire's new Gallery top freezer**, which lets you choose from 100 different organization systems to suit your needs.

Big Chill ranges have retro styling but a modern approach to color: Pick a finish from an existing palette or opt for one of 200 custom hues.



3 Commercial convenience

Appliance manufacturers have always looked to restaurants for inspiration. One notable adaptation is GE's new **Sous Vide Accessory**, available on some of its latest induction cooktops. French for "under vacuum," this method cooks food in a vacuum-sealed bag in a temperature-controlled bath. Fans like the velvety texture the gentle process lends steaks, chicken, salmon, and the like.



4 Outdoor cooking

Homeowners continue to see their outdoor living space as an extension of the home. An example of this is the rise of the **open-fire features**. We saw countless free-standing fire pits and built-in fireplaces at the show. One favorite: the Wave Fire Pit from the Outdoor GreatRoom Company, with an undulating design. **Outdoor pizza ovens** are another hot product, especially if you have money to burn. Consumer Reports market analyst Michael DiLauro, our in-house pizza pro, liked the looks of the Artisan Fire Pizza Oven by Kalamazoo, left.



5 Designer everything

We noticed that several brands have partnered with designers on their product lines. Some of the designers are pretty well known—like **Jonathan Adler** who brings his retro-chic sensibility (above) to **lamine surfacing for Formica** (right). But some of the other “celebrity” names aren’t exactly bold-faced, like the designers of Silestone surfacing’s Influencer Series, or Harley Pasternak, a celebrity fitness trainer with a new blender by Salton. Say what you like about the designs (we thought Adler’s laminate patterns would look great in a modern kitchen), but celebrity endorsement has never been a guarantee of top quality in our tests.



Best & worst small appliances

Consumer Reports' exclusive tests revealed winners and losers in three essential categories.



WINNER: Versatile toaster oven

The roomy Cuisinart TOB-260 toaster oven, \$260, which fits a 12-inch pizza, not only cooked and toasted its way to one of the top spots in our ratings but also comes with nice extras like a pizza stone and two cooking racks. The manufacturer says it's quick to warm up on the speed convection setting, so there's no need to preheat.



LOSER: Defective controls

We observed glitches with the Krups FBC4 Convection Toaster oven's control panel on four separate samples. As a result, we've rated this \$200 appliance a Don't Buy: Performance Problem. The samples did shut off at the end of their toasting cycles, which is why we haven't judged this to be a safety problem. If you own the Krups FBC4 Convection Toaster Oven, contact the manufacturer.

WINNER: Fast brewer

The Nespresso by KitchenAid pod coffee/espresso maker, \$450, turned heads when it hit our labs. So did its price. Want a quick cup of joe? Its brewing time was excellent. It made a super-speedy first cup as well as consecutive cups, plus it's a snap to use. But, our top pod maker, the DeLonghi Nescafé Dolce Gusto Genio EDG455T, costs only \$130. So you could buy three for the price of this KitchenAid machine.



LOSER: Overheating model

Keurig is recalling more than 7 million of its Mini Plus Brewing System, Model K10 coffeemakers because during brewing the water can over-heat and spray out onto users, possibly burning them. The coffeemakers involved in the recall have an identification number starting with 31, followed by other numbers on a white sticker on the bottom of the unit. If you own this model, contact Keurig for a free repair by going online to keurig.com.



WINNER: Affordable option

It didn't quite make our list of recommended models, but the \$50 Black & Decker Fusion blade digital BL1820SG-P blender outperformed a \$1,000 Breville unit and more than four dozen other blenders in our tests. Even more surprising is that it's the first time that a Black & Decker has cracked our top 10 blender list. It was excellent at making icy drinks and very good at puréeing. It did OK in our ice-crush tests. Plus it has a sturdy glass container.



LOSER: Flimsy construction

We've judged the NutriBullet Pro 900 a Don't Buy: Safety Risk. Though it made a very good piña colada and excellent soup purée, a blade cracked or broke on two separate units during our durability test, in which we crush seven large ice cubes 45 times to simulate rigorous use. If you own the product, we suggest you stop using it. NutriBullet, LLC, responded by stating that the machine is not a blender or an ice crusher and that our testing was a misuse of the product.



Top juicers

This could be called the year of the juicer. Sales have been surging as more people look to bring the juice-bar experience home. Follow

#juicing, and you'll be inundated with recipes, from conventional carrot and apple to trendy green juices packed with kale, cucumbers, and more.

Though the health benefits of juicing tend to be a little overblown—there's no substitute for whole fruits and vegetables—

a juicer can add more vitamins and minerals to your daily diet. Unfortunately, some of the juicers we tested were so complicated to operate and hard to clean that they'd probably end up collecting dust in a cabinet.

But we did find capable models from the two main types. Juice extractors, also known as centrifugal juicers, use a rapidly whirling disk to cut fruit or vegetables into tiny pieces that are then spun to separate the juice from the pulp. Auger-style juicers, also called masticating or cold-press juicers, work by slowly crushing and mashing the produce.



WHAT'S THE BEST JUICER FOR YOU?

FOR MULTITASKERS

OMEGA NC900HDC, \$330

This auger-style juicer scored big for juice output, and it's different from other juicers in that it comes with attachments for fresh pasta, coffee beans, almond butter, and more. We cranked out a few pasta batches, and it worked as promised. Note that you have to make the dough separately, so it's not as handy as a dedicated pasta maker that mixes, kneads, and extrudes all in one.

FOR FIRST-TIME JUICERS

Extractor-style Juice extractors are easy to use, and they're generally less expensive than auger-style machines, two reasons we recommend them for juicing novices.



JUICEMAN JM8000S, \$100

Our top-Rated model features a large feed tube the size of a tennis ball, which means you won't have to spend a lot of time cutting everything up. Plus its blades can handle hard produce, such as carrots and beets.



CUISINART CJE-1000, \$150

This extractor performed almost as well the Juiceman, and is a bit quieter, which you might like if your kitchen is near living areas. Because of the high blade speed, both models turned out juice that was fairly frothy in our tests.

FOR NUTRITIONISTAS:

Auger-style Because they slowly crush produce, these leave behind more pulp, and that could make for a more fiber-packed juice. They're also better suited to wheatgrass and leafy greens.



KUVINGS WHOLE SLOW B6000, \$430

This is our highest-rated auger-style juicer. Juice output was very good, with little froth, and it's one of the quietest models we tested. It has a large feed tube, which saves time cutting produce.



FAGOR PLATINO 967010008, \$200

This juicer has a smaller feed tube than the Kuvings, but if you don't mind the extra prep work, its juice output was among the best of all tested models, plus it's well-priced for an auger-style juicer.

5 SURPRISING KITCHEN FIXES

You won't believe the difference these fast-and-easy changes can make.



Lighting

Choose one prominent location and install a show-stopping light fixture. Good sources for affordable fixtures include cb2.com, lightinguniverse.com, and lampsplus.com. Also try craigslist.org or flea markets. Even if you have to pay an electrician to rewire a nonworking fixture, the price might still be right.



Color

A few well-placed bursts of bold color can give an otherwise neutral space an energetic new outlook, without committing to an overwhelmingly intense scheme. A deep blue on the base of the island, coordinating accents on woven bar stools, a watery glass vase, and even something as simple as a bowl of oranges can up the style ante in an instant—and you can change it all if you get tired of the color.





Backsplash

Updating the backsplash is a smart high-impact, (relatively) low-cost update. According to George W. Edwards, a National Assn. of the Remodeling Industry-certified kitchen and bath remodeler based in Chester, Pa., the average cost is about \$3 to \$5 per square foot, though decorative inlays and trims can cost more. Keep costs down by opting for solid-color field tile instead of pricey handmade patterned or textured tiles. Check for sales at local tile stores, or sites like craigslist.org or freecycle.org to find deals or giveaways on contractors' extras.



Left: Organic Bike and Doily All Over Pattern Block Print Tea Towel, \$20 to \$21, artgoodiesonline.com

Details

Inject a playful attitude with a few carefully chosen accessories. Window treatments, tea towels, dishware, even fruit and flowers can all add color and interest. For a modern look, stick with simple, graphic patterns, and don't crowd the countertops with collectibles. Less is usually more, particularly when the accessories you've selected have a strong color or pattern. Find good buys in the sale sections of sites like allmodern.com, designpublic.com, inmod.com, and crateandbarrel.com. Etsy is a good source for handmade touches, but the site can be difficult to search. Target and HomeGoods are great brick-and-mortar bets.

Right: Emtex 86020US10B knob, build.com
Below: Classic Hardware Antique Primitive Cup Bin Pull, \$7.15, vandyckes.com



Hardware

New knobs and pulls can give your old cabinets a fresh look. To avoid having to fill in a bunch of screw marks, be sure to measure the distance between the holes after you remove the original hardware. Choose new styles that match that size (take the old hardware to the store with you to be safe). You'll find bargains in the hardware aisle (not the cabinetry aisle) of your local home center, online (try overstock.com) and Ikea.



Tomato

TRY: Benjamin Moore Aura in Piñata 007

Red is believed by color psychologists to stimulate the appetite, so it's a natural choice for the kitchen or dining room. This particularly energetic shade works well in a limited area, like an accent wall or backsplash; an entire room painted in this color could feel overwhelming.



BRIGHT EFFECTS

A fresh coat of paint in a bold (or subtle) color can give your old kitchen an exciting new look—no renovation required.



Seafoam

TRY: Clark + Kensington Enamel in Wish You Were Here 31D-3

Highlight a focal point area, such as an island or the area behind the range, with a special shade like seafoam. This color, reminiscent of classic guitars and surf boards, works especially well in rooms with a vintage flavor, and looks great against warm contrasting tones, like those of wood counters and floors.



Lemon

**TRY: Valspar Reserve
in Lemon Twist 3006-2B**

If you want a little color in your life but you're not ready to commit to a truly bold hue, consider a helping of lemon chiffon. Yellow is believed to inspire creativity, and as the most naturally reflective color in the spectrum, it's a good choice anyplace you'd like to create a light, bright look.



Sky blue

TRY: Behr Marquee in Riviera Blue 540B-5

True blue, the color of the sky and of faded denim, is like a breath of fresh air in the kitchen. Keep the palette cool by pairing this color with other shades of blue, and accenting with white and silvery metallics. A pop of warm contrasting color here and there—think orange or yellow—adds a burst of energy and breaks up a large, monochromatic area.



the **7** best DESIGN DECISIONS

Follow the experts' advice to a kitchen you'll love, now and for years to come.

KITCHEN WISH LISTS vary as much as their owners' lifestyles and tastes. You want a cozy dining nook; your neighbor prefers a breakfast bar. You'd rather pay more for stone countertops; your neighbor's all about the cabinets. Neither of you would dream of investing in the high-end appliances the family across the street craves—and they don't see the point of your built-in sound system or your neighbor's giant pantry. But while your *wants* differ significantly, your *needs* are all the same: Like everyone designing a kitchen anywhere, you need your new space to be efficient, easy to maintain, and durable. And, you need your remodeling project to come in on time, and on budget.

How to bring your wants in line with your needs? We asked the experts for input. Here, kitchen remodeling industry pros from around the country share their best advice on everything from space planning to considering resale values—plus, four big goofs to avoid.

1 DO YOUR HOMEWORK. Before you plunge into the project, start shopping, or hire a designer, and take the time to write out a needs assessment, advises kitchen designer John Petrie, owner of Mother Hubbard's Custom Cabinetry of Mechanicsville, Pa. Ask yourself questions like: Does the space need more square footage? Does the kitchen need better traffic flow? “Think about how you want to

use the space and your goals and objectives,” says Petrie. “If you have a better understanding of those items, you can communicate them to your design professional.”

2 GET THE HELP YOU NEED. Any kitchen remodel involves dozens of decisions on everything from paint colors to complicated plumbing, electrical and construction issues. Without guidance you

can easily make bad choices that can compromise the design—or worse, the safety of your kitchen and home. Working with a kitchen designer can not only help you get the look you want, but can save you from costly mistakes and help you stay within your budget. The key to a good client-designer relationship? Communication, says designer Brigitte Fabi of Drury Design in Glen Ellyn, Ill. “Be honest with your





designer about your budget," she says. "You have to be up front for your designer to be able help you." Look for a pro certified by the National Kitchen and Bath Assn. Visit nkba.org for a list of professionals in your area.

3 KEEP TRAFFIC IN MIND. The best kitchen designs don't feel crowded, says remodeler Robert Criner, of Criner Remodeling of

Newport News, Va. "One common problem I see in older kitchens is that people try to squeeze in an island when there's not enough room," says Criner. (For more on kitchen island design and placement, see "Fantasy Islands," p. 22.) Also, remember to consider the placement of appliances when you want to keep pathways clear: avoid placing a dishwasher directly across from a range, so doors on these

appliances will open fully and won't block traffic flow.

4 LIGHT IT WELL. Layers of light will make your kitchen look more inviting and provide the illumination you need for daily tasks, so don't skimp on a detailed lighting plan. Every space needs a combination of ambient, task, and accent lighting. Use lights on dimmers whenever possible for the



or recycled glass? The type of surfacing you choose is important, but before you pick a slab, make sure you've included enough counter space in your design. "Figure it out by going through your habits, all the way from prep to cleanup," says kitchen designer Denise Dick, owner of Signature Kitchens by Design of Carrollton, Texas. Try to include landing spaces to each side of the cooktop, sink and refrigerator. Dick adds that 90 percent of microwaves are hinged on the left, so having a counter to the right of the microwave gives you a place to put down hot cups or plates.

6 PICK A TIMELESS STYLE. When you choose a design that doesn't adhere too closely to a particular trend or theme—remember avocado-and-harvest gold and Tuscan farmhouse?—your kitchen is more likely to look fresh for years to come. Let the architecture of your home guide your style choices, says kitchen designer Rosemary Merrill of Casa Verde Design in Minneapolis, Minn., and opt for natural materials whenever you can. "Like a crisp white shirt, they always stand the test of time," she says.

7 CONSIDER RESALE. If you plan to sell your home in a couple of years—or just like to think ahead—consider the design and details of the kitchens in homes of similar size and worth in your neighborhood. Keep in mind that prospective buyers tend to focus on the items that are the most expensive to replace—cooktops and ranges, for example. And, they have certain expectations "You don't want to go into a very expensive home and see a cheaper stove," says Christina Pappas a Realtor with The Keyes Company of Coral Gables, Fla., "And if everybody in your neighborhood has gas and you have electric, you'll probably want to upgrade."

most versatility, and take advantage of long-lasting and energy-efficient LED fixtures that stay relatively cool. "You want to be able to set the light to suit your different uses of the kitchen, from entertaining and cleaning to dining or working on

your laptop," explains kitchen designer Kathleen Donohue, a design consultant for Neil Kelly Design-Build Remodeling of Portland, Ore.

5 MAXIMIZE COUNTER SPACE. Marble or granite? Laminate

timeless styling
and plenty of
counter space make
a kitchen livable,
now and later.





...And 4 mistakes to avoid

1 CRAMMING IN THE CABINETRY.

Of course you want ample storage, but your kitchen also needs to “breathe,” says architect Lewis Butler of Butler Armsden Architects of San Francisco. “Too many small drawers and doors can create confusion instead of clarity,” says Butler, “and sometimes too many upper cabinets can be restrictive.” A better alternative is to incorporate some open shelves that allow easy access to often-used items and keep your kitchen from feeling too heavy. Just remember open shelves expose your items, and might not be a good

idea for especially messy homeowners. They can also collect dust.

2 FORGETTING TECHNOLOGY.

A designated space for charging all the electronic devices most of us use daily—phones, tablets and laptops—is an important feature in the modern kitchen. “We try to incorporate a charging station in all of our designs, but try to place it somewhere out of the way,” says remodeler Kevin Anundson of Renovations Group, Inc. of Elm Grove, Wis. A smaller section of countertop near a pantry can be an ideal location. Anundson suggests

choosing a space that’s in the main part of the kitchen but away from water or food.

3 WAFFLING ON DECISIONS.

When you change your mind or take a long time to make design decisions, you can find your budget mushrooming. “I had client who couldn’t decide on some cabinets, and by the time she did she had to pay \$10,000 more because the original cabinet-maker was no longer available,” says architect Richard Carr of Carr Warner Architects of Chicago, Ill. A kitchen project involves multiple trades, and delayed design decisions can wreak havoc on both



your schedule and budget. And if you wait too long after selecting certain products, they could even be discontinued by the time you're ready to make the purchase.

4 FORGETTING MAINTENANCE. Choosing kitchen items for looks alone is a big mistake, says kitchen designer Brett E. La Hay, project designer for Kitchen Dis-

tributors of Littleton, Colo., who advises keeping function in mind. A good example: Marble offers classic beauty but can scratch and stain easily, making it a risky choice as the material for all the counters in your kitchen. "Instead, a good solution would be doing a beautiful marble backsplash or using marble for a designated area like a baking center," says La Hay.



THE BEST (AND WORST) WAY TO FINANCE AN UPDATE

Fixing up your home makes sense from a financial standpoint. That's because the IRS rewards certain types of loans for home improvements with special tax treatment, making that type of borrowing quite attractive. Joint and single filers can deduct interest on debt of up to \$1 million that's used to buy, build, or improve a first or second home; if you're married but file

separately you can deduct up to \$500,000.

Mari Adam, a certified financial planner in Boca Raton, Fla., says a home equity line of credit (HELOC) can often be the best type of loan to pay for home repairs and improvements. Though the interest rate floats, it is usually lower than for other types of loans. A \$50,000 HELOC at, say, 4 percent—the average rate for borrowers with stellar credit, according to Bankrate—would cost just 3 percent after factoring in the tax

deduction, assuming a marginal tax rate of 25 percent.

And the worst way? Putting it on your credit card. "The average rate on a variable-interest credit card is about 15.7 percent," says Adam. "Let's say you have a high credit limit and pay for your \$16,000 minor kitchen remodel on the card, making minimum payments of about 2 percent each month. You'll be paying about \$320 a month and your remodel will take you 30 years to pay off, and end up costing \$44,000."





fantasy ISLANDS

A center island is high on many kitchen wish lists. Here's how to create the functional focal point of your dreams.

CONSIDERING ADDING AN island when you remodel? You're not alone. According to the National Association of Home Builders, 76 percent of potential home buyers considered a central island either desirable or essential to a kitchen. Practical and attractive, islands are deservedly popular: They can provide open prep and serving space, handy appliance placement, storage, and seating—ideal for casual entertaining. And no matter what your budget is, there's probably an option available that will fit your needs, as long as you take the time to size it right, pick the best surfacing, and choose features and storage you'll really use.

Function first

Before you even think about style, consider how you'll use the island. Illinois-based kitchen designer Alan Zielenski says, "I ask my clients, are there multiple cooks in the kitchen, do you entertain, are you left- or right-handed?" Answering those questions and more will dictate what appliances will go into the island, where they will go, and the island's size. For example, a cleaning island will require more room than a cooking island, because a sink, dishwasher, and landing spot for plates takes up more space than a cooktop and its landing spot. An island you'll use for entertaining should have an overhang where you can pull up stools. "I've even created a 'kid island' with a snack zone," says Alabama-based kitchen designer Debe Robinson. "It had a mini-fridge, drawers for snacks, shelves for plates and cups. It's convenient and keeps kids out of the main work area."

Which island is right for you?

Different styles work for different spaces, budgets, and lifestyles.

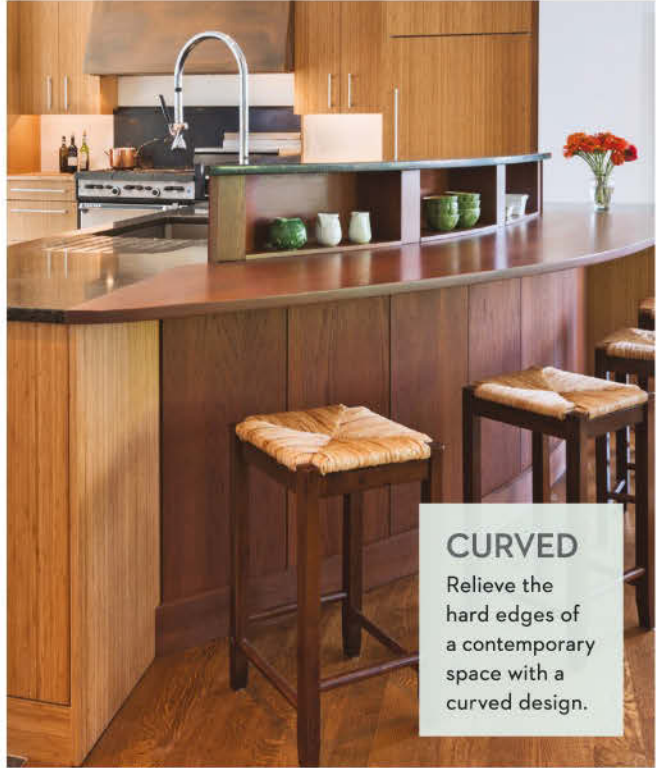
BUILT-IN

For a cohesive, coordinated look, consider an island designed to complement cabinets.



CURVED

Relieve the hard edges of a contemporary space with a curved design.



FREESTANDING

Typically less expensive than built-in styles, freestanding islands also have a lighter look.



TWO-LEVEL

Shield prep and cleanup from view of living areas with a two-level island.



ANDREA RUGG, NAT REA, JANE BEILES, NOEL DEMPSEY DESIGN



SMART STORAGE

Cabinets, drawers, shelves, and more make islands truly multifunctional.

OPEN SHELVES Items are easy to grab, but you will want to keep this area neat because it's open to your guests' view. Infrequently used items can get dusty.

CABINETS Cabinets can go on any side of the island, even behind the knee-space of a breakfast bar, with traditional or sliding doors. Just be sure to keep cabinet depths between 12 and 15 inches, otherwise the items in the back will be difficult to reach.

DRAWERS AND ROLL-OUT SHELVES Drawers open in one movement, but high sides mean you'll have to lift things out to see them. Roll-out shelves inside cabinets have lower sides, so you can see everything at a glance.

APPLIANCE LIFTS If you plan to store small appliances in your island, consider installing appliance lifts. These allow you to bring heavy items to a convenient height without lifting them yourself. But they can be pricey to buy and install.



SLIDE-OUT SURFACES

They increase your counterspace, then slide away when not in use.

Dining in

Make sure your island comfortably accommodates stools by following the National Kitchen & Bath Association's guidelines:

- Allow 24 inches in width for each seat.
- The overhang for a dining bar should be 18 inches deep for a 30-inch-high counter, 15 inches deep for a 36-inch-high counter, and 12 inches deep for a 42-inch high counter.
- And, don't forget lighting. The bottom of a pendant light should be 30 to 36 inches above the surface of the kitchen island.

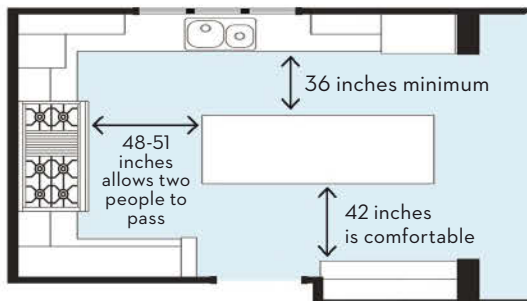


ISLAND ESSENTIALS

Careful planning will help you create an island you (and your budget) love.

How much room?

“The danger of shoehorning an island into a too-small kitchen is that the aisles around it get too tight,” Vermont-based designer Wendy F. Johnson says. To ensure that you have room for passages at least 36 inches wide (the minimum recommended by the National Kitchen & Bath Association), Johnson says “measure from counter edge to counter edge, not cabinet to cabinet.” A 42-inch-wide aisle is comfortable; 48 to 51 inches allows two people to pass. If space is tight, consider a rolling island that fits against a wall when it’s not in use or opt for a peninsula.



SURFACING OPTIONS

Because the island is the focal point of the room, it’s a good idea to use your highest-impact surfacing material on it. Keep costs down by sticking with lower-priced options for the perimeter counters. “You can tie the two areas together with a mosaic on the backsplash that uses colors from both materials,” Debe Robinson says. Consider usage, too. Does the counter need to withstand water or heat—will it surround a sink or butt up against a cooktop? If so, “you’re better off with stone, glass, or concrete, not wood,” according to Wendy Johnson. Of course, you can mix and match: Use rich mahogany for your breakfast overhang and granite next to your cooking area, for example. And always round edges and corners to avoid injuries.

Ways to save

- **The fewer mechanics** (cooktops, ventilation, automatic lifts) in an island, the less costly it will be. Note that U.S. National Fire Protection Association code requires the installation of at least one electrical outlet.
- **Peninsulas are less expensive** to build than islands because you can more easily run the plumbing, gas, and electrical lines to them.
- **Consider a island** instead of a built-in model. Some retailers even offer options for customizing your island with the finish and surface material of your choice.
- **Opt for open shelves** instead of pull-out drawers. Open shelves require fewer materials and less labor.
- **Avoid multilevel islands.** This saves money in two ways: Building a support for a second level adds to construction costs, plus you’ll only need one continuous counter material, not two separate slabs.
- **Place a microwave on a shelf** or choose a drawer-style model instead of having it built in.



ILLUSTRATION BY TAE WON YU; GREG PREMUR, ALEXANDRA ROWLEY

What's hot

The right design details can make your island an appealing focal point.



ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Treating the island like a piece of fine furniture by adding elements like corbels, furniture-style feet, turned corner pieces, paneling, and more adds a rich, personalized look. Even some stock cabinet companies offer such details, so be sure to ask.



WATERFALL EDGES

The “waterfall edge”—continuing the countertop material all the way to the floor one or both sides of the island—is trending in high-end kitchens. It’s a sleek look that’s well-suited to contemporary designs, but adds significant expense.



SECOND SINKS

A second full-size or bar sink in the island is a boon in multicook kitchens or if you like to entertain. Undermounted styles are easiest to clean, since there’s no edge for crumbs to get trapped under. For ultimate convenience, add a second dishwasher, too.



ORGANIC SHAPES

An appealing alternative to the typical rectangle, irregular shapes—inspired, perhaps, by the natural contours of a reclaimed wood island top or another—can lend the workspace a less structured, more handcrafted appearance.

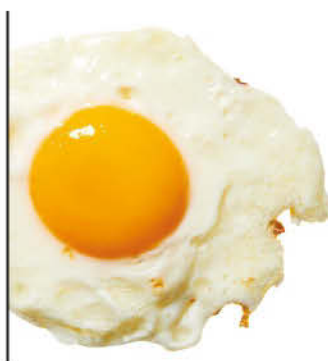


FAST LIVING

Two hours per day. That's how much time today's smart-and-speedy kitchen technology can save you.

TIME IS A precious commodity—and it's one that Americans are willing to pay for. In fact, when Consumer Reports asked more than 4,000 readers if they would shell out more for speedier dishwashers, washers, and dryers, one-quarter of the appliance owners said yes. (About one-third of that group said they would pay an extra \$100 or more.)

Manufacturers are aware of that need for speed. Induction ranges and cooktops are growing ever more popular, single-serve coffeemakers are crowding store shelves, and faster settings are being built into washers and dishwashers. Whatever the product category, all of that clock-watching can pay real dividends: 15 minutes here, an hour there. If you owned one of each type of product on these pages, you could save more than 2 hours per day. Just think of what you could do with that!



WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

'I bought the Sears version [of an induction range] and quickly realized that I had been cooking over a smoldering stick for 20+ years,' wrote a Consumer Reports reader in Vancouver, Wash., on ConsumerReports.org.

TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT: TED MORRISON;
ABOVE: ERIC ROTH



An induction cooktop can boil a large pasta pot full of water in 8 minutes. Spaghetti, anyone?



FASTER SLOW COOKING

You can save time in the long run by taking more time up front. Chop and stir your ingredients in the morning, then let the slow cooker make dinner. That not only saves time, but money, because cheaper, tougher cuts of meat are better for slow cookers.



COOKTOP TIP

Don't slide pots across an induction or smoothtop cooktop the way you might across the grates of a gas range. The bottom of the cookware could scratch or damage the ceramic surface.

Speed cooking

In addition to GrubHub, two recent innovations have trimmed kitchen time significantly: induction cooking and pod coffeemakers. Induction rangetops and cooktops hold the speed record in our tests, often heating a large pot of water 20 to 25 percent faster than a regular electric smoothtop. They're even faster when compared with gas models. They work using a magnetic field that directly heats pans, offering precise simmering and control. And cleaning spills quickly is easier because the induction surface is much cooler than a smoothtop's during cooking and after. Prices for induction appliances have come down, but most are still pricier than electric or gas. As for pod coffeemakers, though they have a downside—limited coffee choices, less-than-top-shelf taste—there's no denying that they're easy and speedy.



115

*The number of minutes
the fastest dishwashers save
vs. the slowest models.*

Ranges



KENMORE 95073, \$1,530

Delivering superfast cooktop heat and precise simmering, this induction range (a top pick) has four cooktop elements (two are high-power). The large oven has a convection option and offers impressive baking and broiling; self-cleaning was excellent. The warming drawer keeps side dishes hot.

Estimated time saved: It's about 3 to 4 minutes faster than an average smoothtop at heating water for pasta.



FRIGIDAIRE GALLERY FGIF3061NF, \$1,800

Two high-power elements on this top pick quickly bring water to a boil. It also offers induction's superb simmering and precise control, ideal when heating sauces or making delicate foods. Baking and self-cleaning are impressive, though broiling is only so-so. The oven's convection option can trim cooking time.

Estimated time saved: It's about 3 to 4 minutes faster than an average smoothtop at heating water for pasta.



GE PHB920SFSS, \$2,200

Fast cooktop heat and great simmering make this induction range excellent overall. The large oven was impressive at baking and superb at self-cleaning, but broiling was so-so. Features include four cooktop elements (three are high-power), convection, steam for light cleaning, and a warming drawer.

Estimated time saved: It's about 3 to 4 minutes faster than an average smoothtop at heating water for pasta.

Dishwashers



BLOMBERG DWT54100SS, \$750

Clocking in at 85 minutes, this dishwasher's normal cycle was the fastest we tested. It offers superb cleaning but is relatively noisy, so use the delayed-start mode when hosting parties. Adjust the upper rack to fit large items. The quick cycle is for light jobs and takes about 35 minutes. You need to clean the filter periodically.

Estimated time saved: 115 minutes vs. the slowest model.



BOSCH ASCENTA SHX3AR7[5]UC, \$730

The 95-minute normal cycle is faster than most we tested. This CR Best Buy dishwasher excelled at cleaning and is especially energy efficient and relatively quiet. Try the 30-minute express wash for lightly soiled or prerinsed items. Features include delayed start and an adjustable upper rack and tines. You need to clean the filter, and the controls are hidden.

Estimated time saved: 115 minutes vs. the slowest model.

TOP LEFT: TED MORRISON

Coffeemakers



DE'LONGHI NESCAFÉ DOLCE GUSTO CIRCOLO FLOW STOP, \$180

This pod coffeemaker, a top pick, is pretty easy to use, with a scroll button to select the serving size. The reservoir holds 44 ounces of water, and it's easy to see how much is left from both the front and side. As with other pods, the coffee tastes just OK, and you're limited to the company's 18 flavors. Plus you can use only one pod at a time no matter the size of your cup.

Estimated time saved: It's 3 minutes faster than the slowest pod coffeemaker.



DE'LONGHI NESCAFÉ DOLCE GUSTO GENIO EDG455T, \$130

Single-serve coffeemakers are all about speed and ease. This top-rated pod was among the fastest, consistently serving the same amount of hot coffee cup after cup. It's fairly easy to use, refill, and clean, and it allows you to adjust the brew strength. But taste was only so-so, though that's true for all pods tested.

Estimated time saved: It's 3 minutes faster than the slowest pod coffeemaker.



STARBUCKS VERISMO 600, \$150

First- and second-cup delivery were speedy and consistent, and this top-pick coffeemaker was fairly easy to use. But brewing strength and coffee flavors are limited, though flavors are similar to what you'll find at a Starbucks store. The coffee tastes so-so, and you'll need Starbucks capsules to get your java jolt.

Estimated time saved: It's 3 minutes faster than the slowest pod coffeemaker.



Quick tips

While modern life may be moving at warp speed, many new appliances we like actually take longer than their predecessors to do their tasks. That's because other things we prize—such as great performance, energy efficiency, and water conservation—mean longer cycles. Want speed and efficiency? Try these tips:

DISHWASHERS

Run the hot water. It's faster at getting hot water to the dishwasher itself to heat it.

WASHERS

Fill 'er up. Larger capacities mean fewer loads.

Measure detergent. Use too much and it can prolong the rinse cycle.

Pick the right setting. The heavy-soil option adds time, so use it only when needed.

Understand speedy settings.

Quick-wash cycles are only for two to four lightly soiled items. Other fast settings, such as GE's Time Saver, Kenmore's Accela-Wash, LG's TurboWash, and Samsung's SuperSpeed, cleaned well and shaved off 15 to 20 minutes in our tests using full loads of stained and soiled laundry.

DRYERS

Clean filters. Do it after each load to keep air flowing freely. If laundry is taking longer to dry, clean the exhaust vent.

Induction cooktops



GE PROFILE PHP900DMBB, \$1,400

Even the fastest electric smoothtops can't beat the heating speed of the fastest induction cooktops, which use an electromagnetic field to send most of the heat to pans. This 30-inch top pick has four elements (three high-power) and offers superb simmering. The stainless trim is a nice touch.

Estimated time saved: It's about 4 minutes faster than an average smoothtop at heating water for pasta.



WHIRLPOOL GCI3061XB, \$1,200

Fast heat and precise simmering at a price lower than many others we tested make this 30-inch induction cooktop a CR Best Buy. Features include easy-to-read touch controls placed in the front and center, and four elements, including two that are high-power.

Estimated time saved: It's about 2 minutes faster than an average smoothtop at heating water for pasta.



KENMORE 43820, \$1,700

Super at simmering, this 30-inch induction cooktop is also among the fastest models we've tested at bringing water to a boil. It has four elements; three are high-power and one is low-power. Touch controls and stainless-steel trim add to the sleek look of this top pick.

Estimated time saved: It's about 4 minutes faster than an average smoothtop at heating water for pasta.

same space NEW FACE

Despite its elegant looks, this is actually a hard-working family kitchen designed with practicality and easy upkeep in mind.





There was no doubt, when Sophia Avonzato and Michael Blumberg bought their Main Line Philadelphia

home, that the kitchen needed an update. "It was a well-built kitchen, but the layout was awkward and it looked really dated," says Sophia. "We knew we'd have to remodel to get a more functional space and a lighter, more modern look, but we wanted to figure out a way to do it without a big addition," she says.

The couple and their two young daughters spent two years living in the space before turning to designer Naomi Stein of Philadelphia-based Design Manifest for help with the project. "Living with the old kitchen for so long helped us figure out what worked and what didn't and gave us time to gather ideas," says Sophia. "Then, Naomi took those ideas and turned them into a new kitchen."



The old layout included an alcove that held a trash compactor and little else. Eliminating it made room for a bigger fridge and an improved flow.

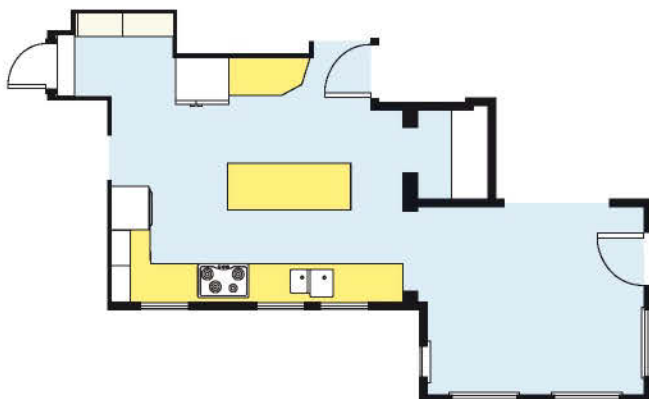


BEFORE

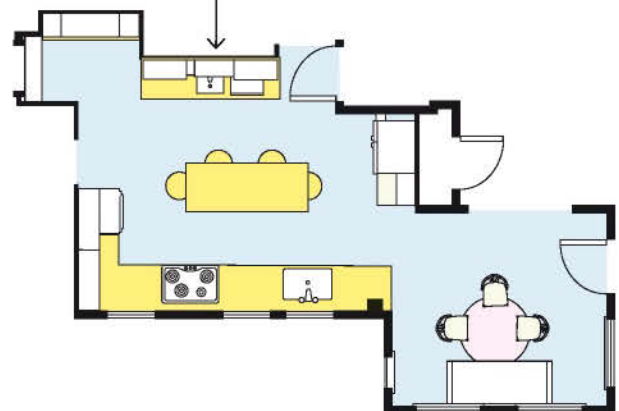
A low wall at the end of the main countertop run blocked the views from the kitchen to the breakfast area, making the space feel choppy.

The couple's main requirement for the new space was that it be family-friendly. "Of course we wanted it to look great," says Sophia, "but we really use this kitchen, and we're in here with two young kids all the time. So it was very, very important that everything be easy to use and easy to clean." With her clients' goals in mind, Naomi rearranged the layout of the appliances and cabinets to create two distinct zones—a prep, cooking, and clean-up zone on one side of the kitchen, and a snack and entertaining center on the other, divided by a freestanding center island. "This type of arrangement

A snack zone houses a microwave and beverage fridge.



BEFORE. The old kitchen had plenty of room, but an awkward flow due to an unnecessary alcove and oddly placed half walls.



AFTER. Removing the alcove and repositioning the refrigerator made room for a snack zone and opened views to the dining area.



Sophia wanted a freestanding island so she could sweep underneath it easily.



ideas
**TO
STEAL**

MIRRORED CABINETS. A bank of cabinets fills a ‘dead’ space in the layout. Adding antique mirrors to the upper doors makes the storage unit look like a piece of fine furniture.



CUSTOM-PAINTED HOOD. The hood canopy came ready to paint, so the designer had it matched to the upper cabinets. The speedy induction cooktop is one of Sophia’s favorite features.



NO WINDOW SILLS. Stein had the trim removed from the windows so the tumbled marble tile wall treatment could go right up to the frame, creating a clean, seamless look.



FREESTANDING ISLAND. Made of wood reclaimed from an old factory, the island is the family’s main meal spot. “Being able to see under it makes the space look bigger,” says Sophia.



makes it easy for kids or guests to get what they need but keeps them out of the path of the cook,” she says.

The designer improved the visual flow in the space by eliminating a small alcove, dividing it to create a coat closet by the back entrance to the house and a niche for the refrigerator on the kitchen side of the space. “You used to walk into the kitchen and look right at the refrigerator,” says Sophia. “Now it isn’t so dominant.” New appliances, most of them fitted with cabinet panels

to create a cohesive look, round out the plan.

To give the kitchen a lighter style, Naomi replaced the heavy wood cabinets with a simpler style painted in charcoal and pale gray. She continued the color scheme with tumbled marble tile and quartzite countertops, adding antique brass accents for warmth.

The result is a space that’s deceptively elegant—but also practical. “I love the cabinets, the lighting, and all the details,” says Sophia. “But even more, I love how easy it is to live in.”

Three signs your kitchen is stuck in the past



CHERRY AND GRANITE. Red-toned wood cabinets and heavily veined granite counters were high style—in 1990.



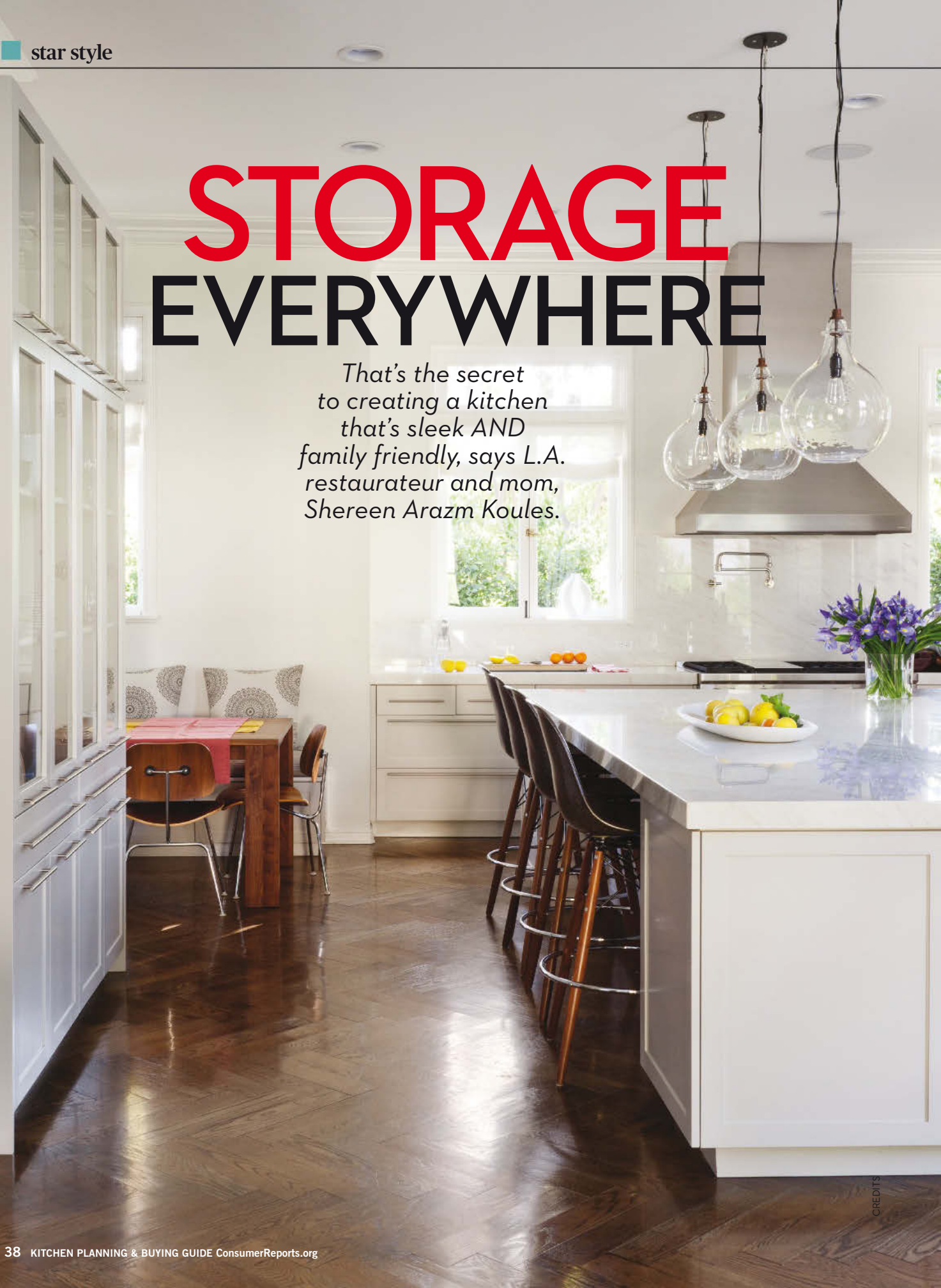
COUNTRY KITSCH. Cutesy accessories like this stained-glass fixture are hallmarks of late ’70s and early ’80s design.



PATTERNED VINYL. It may have been the latest thing in the 1960s, but decorative vinyl tile looks a lot less groovy today.

STORAGE EVERYWHERE

*That's the secret
to creating a kitchen
that's sleek AND
family friendly, says L.A.
restaurateur and mom,
Shereen Arazm Koules.*





“Marble countertops are not care-free, but to us the classic look was worth making peace with a stain or two.”
—Shereen Arazm Koules

SHE'S A RESTAURATEUR and a former judge of *Top Chef Canada*; he's a former producer and the former owner and governor of the Tampa Bay Lightning professional hockey team. Their life in Los Angeles is glamorous by any standards. But still, Shereen Arazm Koules and husband, Oren Koules, insist on dinner at home with the kids—daughters Sam, 6, and Neve, 3, and Oren's son Miles, 20—almost every night. And so when they remodeled their Hancock Park, Los Angeles home, the couple's main focus was on creating a space that would be comfortable and inviting for their family.

“We really live in the kitchen” says Shereen. “Of course we wanted it to look great, and we do use it to entertain, but mostly it's a casual living space, so it had to be practical and easy to keep clean.” With these goals in mind, and with the help of Toronto-based designer Lara McGraw, Shereen and Oren planned a layout that revolves around an oversized central island. “It's huge,” admits Shereen. “We call it ‘Gilligan's Island.’” But pet names aside, the size





When they bought the house, it hadn't been updated—ever. So job number one was to open up a large space on the first floor to create one

room from several existing smaller spaces. With the layout in place, the Kouleses and their designer gave it a warm, eclectic look that's equally suited to kids or company.

of the island was entirely intentional: It grounds the large, flowing kitchen, provides ample counter space for prep and serving, offers casual seating, and conceals a ton of specialized storage.

Custom cabinets throughout the space offer more room to stow everything from dishes and party supplies to the essentials for the children. "I wanted the kids to be comfortable and entertained in the kitchen, but we didn't want baskets of toys all over the place," says Shereen. "So we designated certain lower cabinets to hold things like their cups and plates, snacks, the aprons they use when we bake together, and their toys."

A pale color palette—light gray cabinets, white marble counters, and sleek stainless appliances—keeps the look cool and modern, while a rich herringbone-wood floor lends warmth and character. The combination reflects the aesthetic of its owners. "It's a beautiful space, but also very down to earth," says Shereen. "And it just makes you feel happy to be there."

DONNA GRIFFITH

Glass globe lights
provide ample
illumination without
blocking cross-
kitchen sightlines.

Storage inside
the island
hides baskets
of toys and
much more.





Cabinets conceal
small appliances
and everything
from champagne
flutes to
serving dishes.

French doors lead
to the backyard,
patio and an
outdoor kitchen
and dining area.

Get the look

Give your own kitchen a splash of L.A. style with these look-alike products, all available online.



MODERN SEAT

Charlie Counter Stool in black, \$263; homegallerystores.com



SCULPTURAL CHANDELIER

Satellite Chandelier, \$1,325; dwr.com



CONTEMPORARY TURQUOISE VASE

Lazy Susan USA Juniper Triad Vase, \$65; allmodern.com



SATURATED DINNER NAPKINS

Sferra Bold Hemstitch Table Linens, \$67 for four napkins; horchow.com



POT-FILLER FAUCET

Traditional Pot-Filler Faucet, Wall-Mount, in chrome, \$399, deltafaucet.com



GENEROUS DINING TABLE

Big Sur Natural 65" Dining Table, \$1,500; crateandbarrel.com

OPPOSITE: DONNA GRIFFITH

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How to use this buying guide

The pages that follow give you the tools you need to make the right decisions on everything from refrigerators to faucets. It's a lot of information—we know. Here's a quick guide to help you navigate. First, a little bit about us.



Consumer Reports is the world's largest independent consumer-product-testing organization. We also survey millions of consumers about their experiences with products and services. We're based in Yonkers, N.Y., and are a nonprofit organization. **What we do.** We buy all the products we rate. And all of our tests and Ratings, in print and online, are unbiased and independent.

What we don't do. We don't accept any advertising; we get our money mainly through subscriptions and donations. We don't accept free test samples from manufacturers. And we don't allow our name or content to be used for any promotional purposes.

What the symbols mean

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

✓ CR Best Buy

These models offer the best combination of performance and price. All are recommended.

✓ Recommended

These are high-performing models that stand out.

We rate products on a 100-point scale; these symbols help you tell at a glance which scored well and which didn't. Those rated Excellent aced most tests. Poor indicates serious flaws.

When narrowing your choices among models, weigh performance, features, price, and attributes that matter to you, such as color, size, or style. For the best combination of performance and price, pick a CR Best Buy.

Most & least reliable brands

GAS AND DUAL-FUEL RANGES

GAS	
Kenmore	9%
Frigidaire	9%
GE	9%
Whirlpool	11%
LG	11%
KitchenAid	15%
Maytag	15%
DUAL-FUEL	
GE	12%

Source: Consumer Reports Annual Product Reliability Survey.

Reliability counts, too. For home-related products alone, we survey hundreds of thousands of people about their experiences. The table above shows the percentage of models of each brand that needed repairs or had a serious problem.

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

F. GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS						FEATURES				
					Cooktop High	Cooktop Low	Baking	Broiling	Oven Capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power Elements/Burners	Medium-power Elements/Burners	Low-power Elements/Burners	Convection Mode	Slide-in Stainless Steel Available
✓	1	Samsung NX58F5700WS	\$1,600	79	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
✓	2	Samsung NX58H9500WS	\$2,000	77	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
✓	3	GE PGS920SEFSS	\$2,800	73	●	●	●	○	●	○	1	3	1	●	●
✓	4	Frigidaire Gallery FGGF3032MW	\$700	71	○	●	●	○	●	○	2	2	1	●	●
✓	5	Kenmore 74132	\$700	71	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	2	1	●	●

Overall score is the sum of the scores for each category, shown by the symbols at right.

The black dots indicate features that make the models more convenient to use.



Tip

Architectural details like furniture-style feet, beaded panels, corbels, and moldings can create a high-end, custom look—but they can drive the cost of your cabinets (way) up.

Cabinets

New cabinets can be a big investment. Here's how to get the most storage and style for your money.

ADDED STYLE AND features are making even basic “stock” cabinets more like midpriced, “semi-custom” lines. More style for less is welcome news to any remodeler. But it's the features you may not see immediately that ultimately determine how well your next set of cabinets will hold up in a busy kitchen.

Once upon a time, dovetail joints inside the drawers were practically all you needed to distinguish high-end cabinets. That distinction has blurred as more manufacturers offer premium features, even on low-end lines. Indeed, we found you can have these and other once-exclusive features and still wind up with shoddy construction.

A little research beforehand can save you time at the store and the thousands you can lose on less-than-stellar cabinets. Start by checking online manufacturer and retail sites and catalogs and taking a good look at store displays; you'll be able to tell the quality cabinets from the polished pretenders once you know where to look. And trust your taste; readers who chose cabinets solely on the basis of advice from contractors, designers, or architects were twice as likely to report a problem as those more involved in the selection, according to a survey by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Use our information on cabinet construction—not price alone—as a guide. Also see page 50 for tips on organizing your cabinets.



How to choose

Spend wisely.

Well-built drawers and guides are important because they get the most use. Better units are made of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-thick plywood or medium-density fiberboard, not particleboard (see “Details that count,” on page 48).

Consider all the options.

Work savers include a lazy Susan, a pull-down soap and sponge holder, roll-out shelves, and deep pot drawers. In-drawer dividers for dinnerware are available from more and more mid-range manufacturers.

Stick with basics.

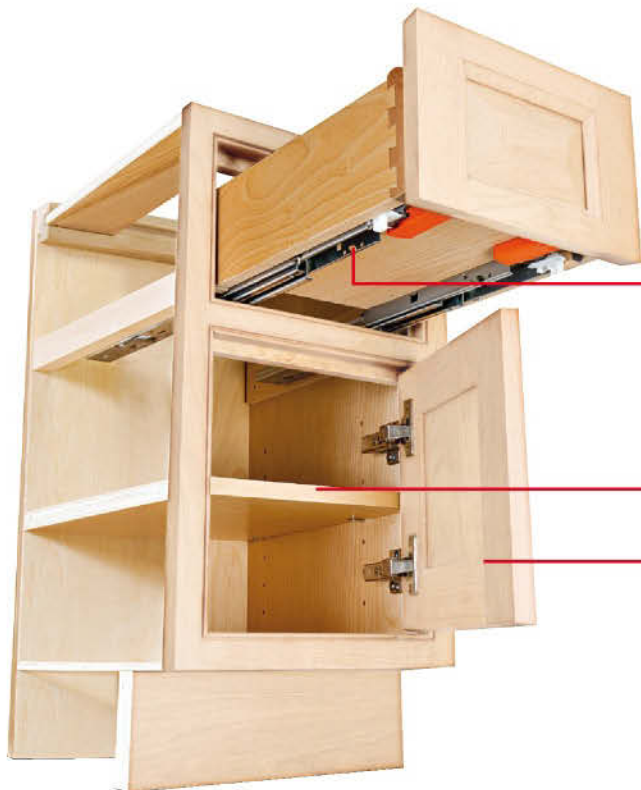
Specialty finishes usually add about 10 percent to 20 percent to the cost, for example. Glass doors, interior organizers, and extra decorative detailing (like corbels and crown moldings) drive up the price, as well.

Remember labor costs.

Professional installation alone can easily cost more than half of what you paid for the cabinets. So unless you have the skills to handle the job yourself, be sure to pad your budget accordingly.

Details that count

Style might be what grabs your eye at the store, but it's the inner details that help well-made cabinets look good and last year after year. Most manufacturers offer a similar range of door styles, whether they're selling ready-made, semicustom, or made-to-order custom cabinets. Here are the features to look for—and some less robust details to avoid:



● DRAWER HARDWARE

Full-extension guides are better than integrated rails or undermounted double-roller designs. Premium models often have a “soft close” feature that stops drawers from slamming shut.

● SHELVES

Look for $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood or medium-density fiberboard (MDF). Lesser quality $\frac{5}{8}$ - and $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch particleboard shelves are more likely to sag.

● CABINET BOX

Best is $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, furniture-grade plywood. MDF is OK, but try to avoid $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch coated particleboard.

● DRAWERS

The best have solid-wood sides, dovetail joinery, and a plywood bottom that fits grooves on all sides. Avoid stapled particleboard.

● DOORS

A solid-wood frame surrounding a solid-wood or plywood panel is preferable to veneered particleboard or an MDF panel. Avoid laminate or thermofoil over particleboard. We didn't find any differences among types of door hinges in our extensive cabinet tests.

● MOUNTING STRIPS

Look for $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hardwood or metal with bolt holes. MDF, particleboard, or wood that's thinner than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch can be a concern for heavily loaded wall cabinets. Ask your installer to be sure to use the stronger stuff.



PARTICLEBOARD



PLYWOOD



GET THE INSTALLATION RIGHT

A good, safe installation will protect your investment. It can prevent boxes from warping, ensure that doors sit flush, and even keep wall cabinets from falling. When the installer comes to make an estimate, have a plan handy. That way, he can account for the heights and types of new wall cabinets, soffits, locations of electrical outlets and plumbing, and other variables that might affect installation.

Make sure the estimate includes removing and disposing of your existing cabinets and any demolition. Before hiring an installer talk

to suppliers and, if possible, at least three former customers to find out how the work has held up. Ask for copies of the installer's insurance certificates as well.

Certification in kitchen and bath remodeling from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry is usually a plus; it indicates a high level of professionalism.

For safety's sake, shore up the wall mountings. And be certain the cabinet installer adequately reinforces the mounting strips if they're made of thin particleboard.

Product guide

Cabinets can vary greatly in price. Here's an overview of the three types of cabinets in broad price segments that you'll find at stores

BASIC

Often called stock, these are inexpensive, off-the-shelf cabinets, ready to assemble and install. Many use frameless construction where the door has no lip or "reveal" around it.

Pros: These are a money-saving choice if you aren't too picky about style options or don't demand a perfect fit. More have better drawers, solid-wood doors, and other once-pricey features. And we've found basic models that perform better in our wear tests than some more-expensive models.

Cons: Many basic boxes are thinly veneered particleboard, rather than higher-quality plywood. Style and trim options, sizes, and accessories are still limited. And figure on an hour or more of assembly time for each set of base and wall cabinets.

MIDLEVEL

These semi-custom models are a sound choice for most kitchens. Many use face-frame construction, where the solid-wood frame shows around the door and drawers.

Pros: Midlevel models offer many made-to-order custom options, including size, materials, finish, elaborate crown moldings and other trim, and accessories such as range-hood covers. That can make them the best-value option overall.

Cons: As with basic cabinets, features and quality can vary considerably. Boxes may be veneered particleboard rather than higher-quality plywood.

PREMIUM

Short of custom made-to-order cabinets, these semi-custom models offer the most style and storage options.

Pros: They generally come with plywood boxes and other premium materials and hardware. Widths may come in ¼-inch increments, rather than the typical 3 inches.

Cons: While generally less expensive than fully made-to-order custom units, models with the most features and highest quality can cost as much as some full-custom units.





Tip

You don't have to rip out your existing cabinets to get organized interiors. You can install ready-made versions yourself. Just be sure to carefully measure the cabinet interiors before you head to the home center. Many organizers come in various sizes, with the dimensions printed on the box, and this is one place where fractions of an inch really count.

Organized, inside and out

A clutter-free kitchen is easier and more enjoyable to work in. Before you order your cabinets, start by making a list of all of the items you plan to store, including pots and pans, utensils, dinnerware, dry goods, and dish towels. Make sure you'll have easy-to-access spots for everything, plus a bit of room to grow. Some popular storage options to consider as you plan your cabinet layout:

- **Drawer dividers** for corralling small items such as cooking utensils and flatware.
- **Pantry cabinets** that feature roll-out trays and adjustable door racks.
- **Slide-out wastebaskets** to keep trash easily accessible but neatly out of sight.
- **Message-center** cabinets that include shallow storage for small items as well as integrated dry-erase message boards or bulletin boards.
- **Toe-kick cabinets** that install between the floor and the base of a cabinet, perfect for holding awkward, shallow items such as cookie sheets, trays, and place mats.



- **Lift cabinets** with spring-loaded shelves that swing up and out to provide easy access to mixers or food processors—then tuck away when they're not in use.
- **Cubby units** that install underneath wall cabinets to hold wine bottles.
- **Vertical dividers**, which neatly shelf cookie sheets and trays on their sides.



CREDITS



GETTING A CUSTOM LOOK

If you're buying budget-friendly stock or semi-custom cabinets, you don't have to settle for the ordinary. Decorative elements can give even basic stock cabinets a more personalized look in an array of styles, including modern, country, and traditional.

Accent doors, available in a variety of styles—textured or colored, frosted glass, and stainless steel—can enhance visual

interest or create an industrial look, suggests Janet Vanderlugt, kitchens manager for Ikea.

Moldings, which range in style from simple and classic to elegant and ornate, can be added to the tops, bottoms, or edges of cabinets as a finishing touch, or along the bottoms of wall cabinets to conceal under-cabinet lighting. Just be

sure the style you choose suits the look of your cabinets.

“Legs,” or feet, added to the bases of built-in cabinets, create the “unfitted” effect of freestanding furniture.

Decorative trim pieces, such as corbels, corner details, turnings, and onlays, can be found for a great price in local lumber stores and home centers.



Finish first

The finish you choose for your cabinets can set the tone for your entire kitchen. Options include clean and modern looks for contemporary kitchens; deep, rich woods for traditional elegance; and purposely “worn” and distressed finishes for old-fashioned or rustic spaces.

The right choice for your kitchen depends on your personal style—and your lifestyle. “The white kitchen is a true classic,” says Susan Serra, certified kitchen designer, certified aging-in-place specialist, and author of The Kitchen Designer blog. “And it’s re-emerging today as an easy look that can be used to interpret any kitchen-design theme.”

If you prefer a more natural look, consider a finish that reveals the wood grain of the cabinet rather than obscuring it. Glazed finishes, for example, add soft, translucent color on top of the wood but also allow the beauty of the grain to show through. Be warned, though: That finish often comes at a premium price. For those in the market for something a bit more modern, matte and high-gloss finishes are available in almost every bold color in the rainbow (not to mention trendy metallics, black, and white).

If you can’t choose just one, create a layered look by combining two or more finishes. To complement a natural wood finish, for example, add an accent cabinet in an opaque color such as pale yellow or blue, or in a neutral, such as taupe. Or choose a bold color for one area, such as the island.

Countertops

Want easy-care surfacing that looks great and stands up to years of use? Quartz topped our tests—but it's not the only good option.



A waterfall edge can lend a modern look to an island, but beware of added expense.

REPLACING YOUR KITCHEN COUNTERTOPS—just the countertops—seems like a reasonable, affordable path to a stylish new look. But although all countertops look terrific when they're new, not all can stand up to a busy kitchen. Here's a look at the pros and cons of some of the countertop materials that Consumer Reports tested. Warning: It's not always pretty.

We stained, sliced, scratched, scorched, and nicked 14 materials from leading brands. Quartz withstood almost everything in our tests—stains, hot pots, abrasive pads, and knives—and unlike granite, it doesn't need

to be resealed. Its combination of beauty, durability, and easy maintenance makes it a great choice for busy kitchens. Granite performed almost as well.

Both materials are a bit pricey. Laminate is still the budget-friendly choice. Its looks have improved, thanks to better printing. Almost everything stained bamboo counters, and although tile itself is stain- and heat-resistant, the grout between the tiles stains even when sealed and can mildew.

Except for recycled glass, we found little difference among competing brands of each type of material.

That's why we rate materials, not brands. Use our Ratings to find which is right for you. And consider a few do's and don'ts:

Don't rely on tiny samples, online photos, or a brochure. Natural stone can vary significantly from store samples, so go to a stone yard to pick a slab yourself.

Don't be afraid to mix and match. Choose a more durable or less expensive material for heavily used areas and something less durable as an accent, such as on an island. You'll save money, and add visual interest.

Do keep an open mind. You might have dismissed laminate as dated, but it looks better than you may remember, and it's durable and budget-friendly. Eco-friendly bamboo counters were easily damaged in our tests; recycled glass offers better performance.

Do remember resale value. Choose a material that won't make prospective buyers wary of maintenance. Tile's easily stained grout lines, for example, can raise a red flag.

Do have the installer measure. Make sure the contract lists the counter's thickness and finish, and fees for sink and faucet cutouts, edge treatments, and backsplash.

How to choose

Of course you want a countertop that looks good on the day it's installed. But it should look just as good five years later. Before you buy, note how your friends' countertops have held up. Then think about your tolerance for stains and wear and tear. Are you a perfectionist? If so, you probably won't get past marble's stains to appreciate the "patina". Consider upkeep and these tips:

Take note of seams.

They should be almost invisible in solid-surfacing and stainless-steel counters. For other countertop materials, $\frac{1}{16}$ inch or less is standard, according to the Fabricator Network, a trade group. Wide joints are a sign of sloppy installation.

Consider the finish.

Quartz and granite are sold with polished (glossy) or honed (matte) finishes. In our tests, both were about the same at fighting stains that were allowed to dry overnight. Granites with proprietary sealers, such as Stonemark, performed no better than regular granite. Matte and grain finishes help conceal scratches in stainless steel better than in polished finishes, but expect fingerprints. Quartz performed similarly regardless of the finish, but butcher block and concrete counters performed differently in our tests depending on the sealer used.

Get edgy.

The edge treatment you choose will affect the look of your counters. Trimming laminate counters with wood can create a higher-end look and prevent chipping. For stone counters, rounded edges are less likely to chip. Straight and beveled edges give a more modern look, and an S-shaped curve called an ogee offers stone or solid surfacing a more traditional feel. Some add to the cost, so check first.

Think about the sink.

Top-mounted sinks, also called drop-ins, sit on top of the counter. Undermounted sinks are installed under the countertop and require a waterproof countertop material, such as quartz, stainless steel, solid surfacing, or concrete. (Water will damage wood or laminate countertops.) Stainless-steel and solid surfacing can be used for the counter and sink.



Eased profile



Bevel profile



Bullnose profile



Short ogee profile

Tip

Quartz or granite are good choices around a sink. Avoid using wood, which can rot, or softer, more stain-prone stones like marble and soapstone.





For maximum stain resistance, opt for marble look-alike quartz patterns, not the real thing.

The worst stains for every surface

You might expect mustard and grape juice to be in a lineup of worst countertop stain offenders. But of the 20 household products in our stain tests, food coloring and permanent marker proved to be the toughest to wash away. Many things stained bamboo, which is no surprise given its dismal overall score. And almost as many items stained limestone and butcher block with an oil-rubbed finish. Here's what left a visible mark on the other countertop materials:

Tile

Food coloring, crayon, ink, permanent marker, and rust

Concrete (with penetrating sealer)

Food coloring, hot oil, permanent marker, and shoe polish

Stainless steel

Drain cleaner and tarnish remover

Paper composite

Drain cleaner, permanent marker, and rust

Recycled glass

Food coloring

Marble

Food coloring and shoe polish



DIY granite?

Love the look of granite but not the price? Rust-Oleum claims its DIY can help transform stained laminate. But can you really get the countertops of your dreams from a box?

We tested it. Using Rust-Oleum's Countertop Transformations to give a laminate counter the look of granite wasn't easy. The process involves plenty of manual sanding using the diamond mesh sander that comes with the kit, applying an adhesive base coat, spreading color chips, sanding the chips, which was a tedious task, and adding a top coat. With a lot of practice, time, and attention to detail, the result was a good-looking, glossy, and dimpled surface that was softer than laminate. So it was less resistant than laminate to cuts, scratches, and chipping in our tests, but it resisted stains and heat well.

Bottom line. You wouldn't mistake it for granite, but if your laminate is marred yet structurally sound, the kit is cheaper than having new laminate counters installed. Two small kits cover 60 square feet—a typical kitchen has 56—for \$296. The \$235 large kit covers 50 square feet. Always use a cutting board for food prep and a trivet for hot pots to protect the softer surface.



Add some (back)splash

Even if you've chosen budget-friendly materials, you can still use finishing touches to give your kitchen custom appeal. For example, the backsplash—the area between the top of the counter and the bottom of the wall cabinets—can be a great place to add contrast and texture. And special edges can spruce up even low-cost countertops.

Because backsplashes don't get as much wear as countertops, you might opt for higher-maintenance materials there. For example, if you like the look of ceramic or glass tile but don't want to deal with cleaning grout on the countertops, tile the backsplash for a colorful highlight. Backsplashes are also at an ideal height for convenient and accessible storage. Systems with shelves, hooks, and rods are widely available. But don't hide a fancy backsplash with a storage system.

Product guide



QUARTZ

Pros: It mimics the look of stone yet needs less maintenance. Hot pots, serrated knives, abrasive pads, and most stains were no match for quartz, which is a combination of mineral, color, and resin. It comes in vibrant colors in addition to patterns that look like granite and marble.

Cons: Edges and corners can chip, and you'll need a pro to repair them.

Price: \$40 to \$100 per square foot



GRANITE

Pros: Each slab of this natural material is unique; rare colors and veining cost more. Heat, cuts, and scratches didn't harm granite in our tests. Polished and matte finishes resisted most stains when properly sealed, so pick the look you prefer.

Cons: Periodic resealing is required. Like quartz, edges and corners can chip and must be professionally repaired.

Price: \$40 to \$100 per square foot



RECYCLED GLASS

Pros: Large shards give it a fun, contemporary look; finely ground glass makes it less busy. Most glass counters we tested resisted stains, cuts, scratches, and heat.

Cons: It's the only material for which we found a difference among brands. Cosentino's Eco counters were the only ones that developed a thin crack during our heat tests.

Price: \$60 to \$120 per square foot



LAMINATE

Pros: Inexpensive, easy to install, and so much better-looking than you probably remember, thanks to new printing technology and decorative edges. Stains and heat didn't damage the laminates we tested.

Cons: Cutting directly on it easily and permanently damages laminate, so use a cutting board.

Price: \$10 to \$40 per square foot



TILE (CERAMIC OR PORCELAIN)

Pros: Ceramic and porcelain tiles are heat resistant, making them ideal for use near stoves. It comes in many colors, sizes, and patterns.

Cons: It chips. The grout between tiles can stain even when it's sealed, and it can mildew. Poor installation can increase those problems. Thinner grout lines and darker grout might help somewhat.

Price: \$5 to \$30 per square foot



SOLID SURFACING

Pros: Available in a variety of colors and patterns, it can be used for counters, sink, and backsplash, creating a seamless look because joints are almost invisible. Color won't vary much from sample to slab. It is resistant to most stains, and small nicks and scratches can be repaired.

Cons: It scratches and cuts easily, so a cutting board is a must.

Price: \$35 to \$100 per square foot



SOAPSTONE

Pros: Best for adding the beauty of stone to a low-traffic kitchen. It's not as common as granite. It withstands heat very well, and small scratches can be repaired. Slabs vary, so go to a stone yard.

Cons: Soapstone is easily sliced, scratched, and nicked. Stain resistance is so-so, and it needs to be rubbed with mineral oil periodically.

Price: \$50 to \$100 per square foot



CONCRETE

Pros: Concrete can be custom-dyed or textured, making it ideal for personalizing.

Cons: It can develop cracks. Its durability depends on the fabricator's skill and the sealers used. Topical sealers, which resist stains but not heat, aren't ideal for kitchens. Penetrating sealers resist heat but not stains, and they must be reapplied regularly.

Price: \$60 to \$120 per square foot



STAINLESS STEEL

Pros: Best for a sleek look in a modern kitchen. It repels stains and heat, and doesn't rust or discolor. A countertop can be made with an integral sink for a seamless appearance.

Cons: It shows fingerprints, and it dents and scratches easily. Matte and grain finishes hide damage better. Stainless steel can look cold and clinical.

Price: \$50 to \$150 per square foot



BUTCHER BLOCK

Pros: It creates a warm, natural look in a country kitchen. It's good for cutting produce and is easy to install and repair.
Cons: It might need periodic sealing or refinishing to remove cuts, dings, and scratches. Its finish affects performance. Varnish improves stain resistance, and penetrating oils decrease it.
Price: \$40 to \$100 per square foot



PAPER COMPOSITE

Pros: We tested a version from Richlite, which says that its paper-and-resin countertops are green, in part because the paper comes from renewable resources. It did well at resisting stains and heat.
Cons: It was only fair when it came to cuts and abrasions, and the resin used is petroleum-based and nonrenewable.
Price: \$30 to \$100 per square foot



LIMESTONE

Pros: It offers a stone look without heavy veining and resists heat well.
Cons: Scratches and dings from our dropped 5-pound weight marred the surface of this soft, porous stone, and even a high-quality sealer didn't protect against stains. Eleven of the 20 substances we applied left stains.
Price: \$50 to \$100 per square foot



MARBLE

Pros: Marble is best for a classic stone look in low-traffic areas, such as a baking zone. It's available in a wide range of natural colors.
Cons: It's more porous than granite, so it's not as stain-resistant. It also scratches easily, can chip, isn't very heat-resistant, and needs to be resealed periodically to help ward off stains.
Price: \$50 to \$150 per square foot



BAMBOO

Pros: Available in several styles, including a parquet pattern, bamboo can create a clean, modern look.
Cons: Better for show than for everyday use, bamboo is easily stained, scorched, sliced, and nicked. The maker might warn against using it around a sink because moisture can warp the material. And it might darken over time.
Price: \$40 to \$100 per square foot

Ratings

All tested materials in performance order.

MATERIAL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS				
			RESISTS				
	Per sq. ft.		Stains	Cutting	Heat	Abrasion	Impact
Quartz (engineered stone)	\$40	84	●	●	●	●	●
Granite	\$40	81	●	●	●	●	●
Recycled glass (penetrating sealer) ¹	\$60	69	○	●	●	●	●
Laminate	\$10	68	●	●	●	○	●
Tile (ceramic and porcelain)	\$5	67	●	●	●	●	○
Solid surfacing	\$35	53	●	●	●	●	●
Soapstone (mineral oil finish)	\$50	46	○	●	●	●	●
Concrete (penetrating sealer)	\$60	40	●	○	●	●	●
Concrete (topical sealer)	\$60	39	●	●	●	○	●
Stainless steel	\$50	39	○	●	●	●	●
Butcher block (varnished)	\$40	37	●	●	●	●	●
Paper composite ²	\$30	34	●	●	●	●	●
Limestone	\$50	27	●	●	●	●	●
Butcher block (oil finish)	\$40	24	●	●	●	●	●
Marble	\$50	14	●	●	●	●	●
Bamboo (beeswax/mineral oil finish)	\$40	10	●	●	●	○	●

¹ Unlike other brands, Cosentino's Eco line of recycled-glass counters developed a thin crack during our heat tests and was excluded from the Ratings. ² Only Richlite's product was tested. Results for other brands may vary.

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE summarizes performance in all tests. **STAINS** shows resistance to 20 common foods and household products. **CUTTING** reflects resistance to damage from weighted chef's and serrated knives used in slicing and chopping motions. **HEAT** gauges how well materials resisted damage and discoloration from a pot filled with oil heated to 400° F. **ABRASION** is resistance to damage from a weighted sanding block. **IMPACT** reflects ability to withstand blunt and pointed weights dropped from up to 3½ feet. **PRICE** is per square foot, including installation.

Flooring

The best floors in our tests are durable, beautiful, and easy to clean.



Tip

When you get it home: Before installing wood or laminate flooring, unpack it and let it sit for one to three days in the space where it will be installed so that its temperature and moisture match the levels in the room.

LOOKING FOR A fresh new look or easier maintenance? A new floor could be just the change your kitchen is waiting for. But before you head to the home center or flooring retailer, think about your needs. Begin by considering how much traffic, sunlight, and other wear and tear it will get. Vinyl proved tops in our moisture tests and most linoleum, laminates, and solid wood fared nearly as well. But a few engineered woods, as well as some solid woods, and a linoleum product we tested flubbed that test—a serious

drawback in a busy kitchen. And while the best vinyls and laminates fended off wear better than solid wood, they can't be refinished.

Before settling on a product, pay for a few samples. That can be a lot less expensive than winding up with flooring that looks great in a catalog or on a website and then awful in your home. Manufacturers generally match most wood or engineered-wood flooring for color and grain. But variations can occur from one batch to the next, so buy the flooring you'll need all at once. All the

laminate floorboards in a package often have a similar pattern, so you may want to pull from multiple packages to avoid repetition.

Concerned about formaldehyde emissions from laminates? We're concerned as well about some of the Lumber Liquidators flooring that *60 Minutes* claimed exceeds California's limits. For now, consider returning uninstalled products from this brand if you can and if not, ventilate well by running exhaust fans and dehumidifiers for several weeks after installation.

Product guide

*Prices include installation.

SOLID WOOD AND BAMBOO

Best for natural warmth. Solid flooring can usually be sanded and refinished many times, if necessary.

But both tend to dent easily, a problem for households with children. Several changed color under UV light, and some can be damaged by flooding.

Both are challenging to install.

Price \$5 to \$10 per square foot*

PLASTIC LAMINATE

Best for toughness, lots of styles, and easy installation. It can mimic a variety of natural materials and can usually be floated. The best products wear well, and all resist stains and sunlight.

But most dent relatively easily, and plastic laminate can't be refinished.

Price \$3 to \$7 per square foot*

CERAMIC TILE

Best for kitchen projects with a bigger budget, though newer floating varieties such as those in our Ratings are more affordable. This natural material offers an array of styles and colors.

And it tends to resist wear well.

But most don't float and are difficult to install. Dropped items can crack it, and grout stains. Replacing a floated tile can be tricky.

Price \$8 to \$15 per square foot; \$5 to \$8 for floating products*

ENGINEERED WOOD AND BAMBOO

Best for easy installation and natural warmth. This veneer over substrate can usually be nailed, stapled, or glued in place—or snapped together and floated without fasteners or glue. Many products of this type can be refinished once.

But they can be damaged by flooding, and they usually show wear quickly and dent easily.

Price \$4 to \$9 per square foot*

VINYL

Best for practicality and easy installation. Many products resist wear from moisture, dents, stains, sun, and foot traffic, with tiles and strips doing best. Some newer styles look more like stone than older versions do.

But even the best still look like vinyl up close.

Price \$2 to \$6 per square foot*

LINOLEUM

Best for those who want a sustainable, resilient surface and lots of style choices. All of those we tested resisted stains and especially sun exposure. Some also had other strengths.

But all fell down in at least one of our tough tests. Vinyl tiles offer more choices and better performance overall.

Price \$4 to \$9 per square foot*

How to choose

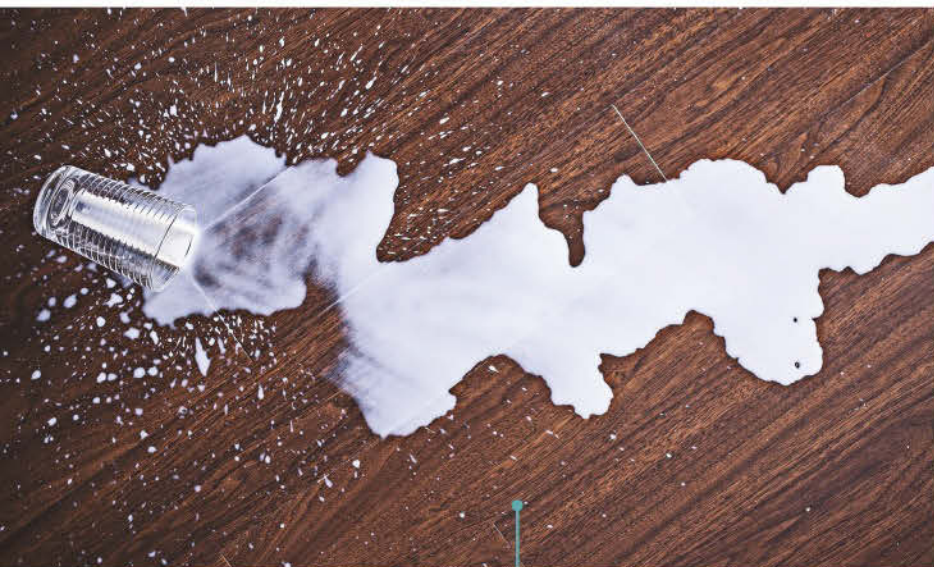
1 Know how rough you'll be. The best products in every category were also the best overall in our simulated foot-traffic tests. For less busy kitchens, you may want to consider the top engineered wood or bamboo, with its blend of natural veneer and easy installation.

2 Pick a factory finish. Prefinished wood and bamboo floors cost about 40 percent more than unfinished products. But you're likely to save overall because a factory finish tends to last longer, and paying a pro to apply the finish adds costs, mess, and hassle. Factory finishes

are also warranted by the manufacturer.

3 Check for certification. Vinyl floors with the industry's FloorScore certification emit relatively low levels of volatile organic compounds, substances linked to health problems and pollution. All vinyl we recom-

mend has that certification. For wood flooring, certification by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative offers some assurance that it comes from responsibly managed forests, a plus for the planet. The product and manufacturer must be certified; check the packaging.



Steps to savings

Retailers' losses can be your gain. Discounters such as Lumber Liquidators (lumberliquidators.com) and iFloor (ifloor.com) buy directly from manufacturers and sometimes offer deals on overstocked flooring. You also can often save on opened or damaged boxes and flooring with minor surface flaws.

Buy only what you need. Determine the room's square footage by multiplying length by width. Then buy 10 percent additional to allow for the unexpected.

Keeping it clean

Most flooring comes with some specifics on maintenance do's and don'ts (don't use ammonia-based cleaners on wood, for example). But how do you remove chewing gum, wax, and other messes without damaging the finish? Here are some tips from our experts:

Minor scratches and chips

Some hardwood flooring manufacturers offer color-blended filler that you can use to hide small scratches and dings. If a small area of hardwood flooring is worn, try sanding and refinishing it. But heavily damaged pieces might need to be replaced, especially plastic laminate, which can't be sanded or refinished (the damaged piece has to be chiseled out and a new one inserted). On all types of flooring, try a color-matched felt marker to camouflage small scratches and surface imperfections.

Gum and wax

On wood, cover the stain with a sealed ice pack to make it brittle enough to break off in pieces. Do the same on plastic laminate, vinyl, or linoleum, but be especially careful when scraping it off (try a plastic scraper or credit card). And on any flooring, finish the job by wiping the area clean with a damp cloth to remove any remaining residue.

Oil, paint, marker, lipstick, ink, and tar

On vinyl, use a clean cloth dampened with warm water and detergent; on wood and plastic laminates, use nail-polish remover. Avoid using abrasive cleaners, steel wool, and heavy-duty scouring pads.

See the real thing. Paying for samples costs far less than buying flooring that looks great in a catalog or online—and all wrong once it's installed in your kitchen.

Do your own prep work. Even if you hire a pro for installation, you can save hundreds by tearing out old flooring, leveling the subfloor, and removing any baseboard that's in the way yourself.



FIX THE FLOOR YOU HAVE IN 3 EASY STEPS

Minor damage may even enhance the rustic look of distressed or handscraped floors by blending in with other patina, but you'll probably want to fix other flaws like deeper nicks, scratches, and grooves. Check the manufacturer's manual for any special instructions, then try these simple remedies for unwanted imperfections.

- 1 Mark it.** A color-matched felt marker can hide small scratches in any floor. Some hardwood manufacturers even offer color-blended filler for chips and grooves, available at home centers and flooring stores.
- 2 Sand it.** Badly worn or damaged wood floors must be refinished. But you can do spot repairs of wear or damage with light buffing or sanding, followed by staining. Be especially careful with thin veneers on engineered-wood floors.
- 3 Replace only what's damaged.** Heavy damage or a cracked stone tile usually requires chiseling out the damaged section and gluing in a new piece. But that's still easier than removing an entire row of tiles or planks if you've floated the floor.

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Flooring

Top performers usually resisted wear, scratches, and color change better than others of their type. But dents were a challenge for most. Below, we focus on top picks with specific strengths, value, or both.



A1 Teragren Portfolio Naturals Wheat
TPF-SYN-WHT-126-DL



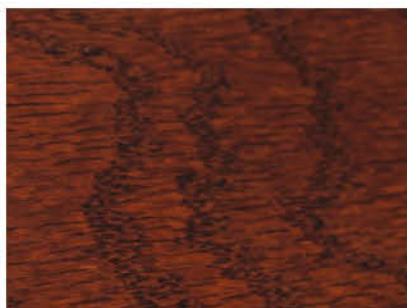
A2 Eco Timber Woven Honey WBH061



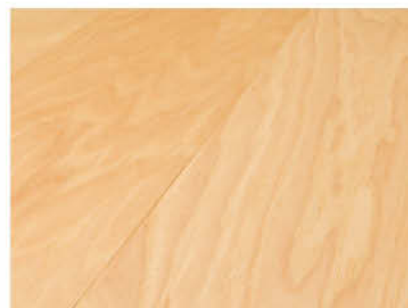
B1 Teragren Synergy Wide Plank Java



B2 TrafficMaster Western Hickory Desert
Gold DH77700144 (Home Depot)



B3 Harris Wood Traditions SpringLoc Red
Oak Bridle HE2505OK48



B4 Armstrong Century Farm Hickory
Natural GCH452NALG



C1 Armstrong Coastal Living L3051 White
Wash Walnut



C3 Hampton Bay Enderbury Hickory
367551 (Home Depot)



D1 Tarkett NAFCO PermaStone
Collection: Natural Slate-Sand Stone



D2 Congoleum DuraCeramic Sierra Slate
SI-74 Golden Greige



E1 Armstrong Marmorette Oak Brown
LP066 CR Best Buy



F1 SnapStone Beige 11-001-02-01

Ratings

All tested materials in performance order.

A. PREFINISHED SOLID WOOD FLOORING

Rec.	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	Sq. ft. Per Box	SCORE	Foot Traffic	Scratches	Stains	Dents	Sunlight (UV)	Installation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Teragren Portfolio Naturals Wheat TPF-SYN-WHT-126-DL ¹	\$7.5	20	75						Floating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	EcoTimber Woven Honey WBH061 ^{1 2}	\$6	23	74						Nail down or glue
	3	Mullican St. Andrews Solid Oak Strip 10930 ²	\$6.3	24	61						Nail down
	4	Home Legend Strand Woven Solid Bamboo Toast HL40S (Home Depot) ^{1 2}	\$3	23	60						Nail or glue
	5	Bruce Dundee Plank CB1210 ²	\$5.7	22	59						Nail down
	6	Armstrong American Scrape Oak Brown Bear SAS503 ²	\$7	24	58						Nail down
	7	Allen + Roth Autumn Oak LSAR45-01 (Lowe's) ²	\$5.5	19	57						Staple
	8	Home Legend Horizontal Solid Bamboo Toast BAFL24TO (Home Depot) ^{1 2}	\$2	24	57						Nail or glue
	9	Mullican Cumaru Natural 17711 ²	\$8.5	15	57						Nail down or staple
	10	Lumber Liquidators Virginia Mill Works Butcher Block Sunset Mountain Oak 10022504	\$5	12	56						Floating
	11	Natural Floors by USFloors Bamboo Woven Strand 602WS1 (Lowe's) ^{1 2}	\$4	23	47						Glue down
	12	Mohawk Rockford Red Oak Natural WSC58-10 ²	\$5	19	45						Nail down or staple
	13	Lumber Liquidators Bellawood Natural Red Oak ²	\$4.4	40	44						Nail down or staple
	14	Lumber Liquidators Morning Star Strand Natural ^{1 2}	\$3.9	17	41						Nail down or glue

B. ENGINEERED WOOD FLOORING

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Teragren Synergy Wide Plank Java ¹	\$7	23	76						Floating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	TrafficMaster Western Hickory Desert Gold DH77700144 (Home Depot)	\$3	20	71						Floating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Harris Wood Traditions SpringLoc Red Oak Bridle HE2505OK48	\$5.5	33	69						Floating or glue down
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Armstrong Century Farm Hickory Natural GCH452NALG	\$6.5	28	67						Floating
	5	Home Legend Hand Scraped Oak Gunstock Click-Lock HL16 (Home Depot)	\$3.4	25	55						Floating
	6	Mannington American Hardwoods American Oak Plank	\$4	36	55						Floating
	7	Mohawk Pastoria Red Oak Natural HCC27-10 (Home Depot)	\$4.3	29	50						Floating
	8	Mullican MeadowBrooke Cumaru Natural 17107	\$8	29	45						Floating or glue down
	9	Millstead Red Oak Natural Click PF9356 (Home Depot)	\$3	20	37						Floating
	10	Millstead Smoky Mineral PF9577 (Home Depot)	\$4	11	34						Floating
	11	Natural Floors by USFloors Bamboo 609LS (Lowe's) ¹	\$3.3	17	34						Floating
	12	Wicanders Corkcomfort Series 100 WRT Natural O801007 ³	\$7	23	33						Floating

☒ CR Best Buy ☐ Recommended

Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE is mainly resistance to foot traffic, scratches, dents, stains, sunlight, moisture, and slips. **MOISTURE RESISTANCE** (not shown) is based on a damp sponge left overnight and soaked samples (longer exposure). **FOOT TRAFFIC** is how quickly surface wear was noticeable using an abrasion machine. **SCRATCHES** denotes ability to resist damage from a simulated dragged object. **STAINS** is resistance to marring from grape juice, mustard, and other liquids left overnight. **DENTS** is resistance to blunt and pointed objects dropped from different heights. **SUNLIGHT (UV)** is resistance to color change after more than 300 hours of high ultraviolet levels. **PRICE** per square foot is approximate retail. **SQUARE FEET PER BOX** is as claimed.

C. LAMINATE FLOORING

Rec.	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	Sq. ft. Per Box	SCORE	RESISTS					Installation
						Foot Traffic	Scratches	Stains	Dents	Sunlight (UV)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Armstrong Coastal Living L3051 White Wash Walnut	\$3.5	14	79						Floating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Hampton Bay Enderbury Hickory 367551 (Home Depot)	\$2.6	25	76						Floating
	3	Pergo Max Natural Oak 90870 (Lowe's)	\$3	18	62						Floating
	4	Armstrong Architectural Remnants Woodland Reclaim Old Original L3102	\$5	22	62						Floating
	5	Pergo XP Grand Oak LF000326 (Home Depot)	\$3.5	20	60						Floating
	6	Project Source Winchester Oak 2765 (Lowe's)	\$1	24	59						Floating
	7	Mannington Restoration Collection Chateau Sunset 22300	\$4.3	17	59						Floating
	8	Home Legend Santos Mahogany HL87 (Home Depot)	\$3	13	49						Floating
	9	Shaw Timberline SL247 Sawmill Hickory 255	\$5	18	47						Floating
	10	Innovations Sand Hickory FL904072 (Home Depot)	\$4	19	35						Floating

D. VINYL FLOORING

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Tarkett NAFCO PermaStone Collection—Natural Slate-Sand Stone NS-660 ^[2]	\$4.7	27	96						Glue down
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Congoleum DuraCeramic Sierra Slate SI-74 Golden Greige ^[2]	\$5	17	95						Glue down
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Armstrong LUXE Plank Timber Bay Barnyard Gray A6861	\$5.5	24	94						Floating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Armstrong Alterna Mesa Stone Canyon Sun D4112 ^[2]	\$5.5	25	90						Glue down
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Shaw Matrix Regency Gunstock Oak LX90100706 (Lowe's)	\$2	28	81						Floating
	6	Mannington Adura Essex Oak Natural AW511 ^[2]	\$5	16	79						Glue down
	7	Congoleum AirStep Evolution Colonial Plank Golden Tan 72012 ^{[2],[4],[5]}	\$4	Data not available	78						Loose lay or glue down
	8	Lumber Liquidators Tranquility Antique Oak 10024424	\$2.9	20	74						Floating
	9	Tarkett FiberFloor Lifetime Berkshires Oak Harbour Brown 38163 ^[4]	\$2	Data not available	70						Floating
	10	Style Selections Antique Oak WD4712 (Lowe's) ^[2]	\$3	40	67						Peel-and-stick
	11	Mannington Black Mountain Oak Fireside 080171 ^{[4],[5]}	\$1.5	Data not available	61						Loose lay or glue down
	12	Home Legend Oak Graphite HLVT3024 (Home Depot)	\$2.8	23	56						Floating
	13	SmartCore by Natural Floors Canberra Acacia 50SLV503 (Lowe's)	\$2.8	20	52						Floating
	14	TrafficMaster Allure Ultra Vintage Oak Cinnamon 517115 (Home Depot)	\$3	20	51						Floating

E. LINOLEUM FLOORING

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Armstrong Marmorette Oak Brown LP066 ^{[2],[4]}	\$4.5	Data not available	79						Glue down
	2	Forbo Marmoleum Click Square Walnut 763874	\$8	7	62						Floating
	3	Nova Linoleum 6615	\$6	18	35						Floating

F. CERAMIC TILE FLOORING

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	SnapStone Beige 11-001-02-01	\$8	5	94						Floating
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^[1] Bamboo product. ^[2] Cannot be floated. ^[3] Cork product. ^[4] Not applicable; comes in sheets. ^[5] Loose-lay installation; requires some adhesive or tape at edges and seams.

Interior paint

Pick one of our top-Rated paints to give your kitchen a new look this weekend.

PAINT IS ONE OF THE easiest and most cost-effective tools in a kitchen transformation. With a weekend of work, you can give your space a fresh new look, for under \$100. Our latest tests revealed products that make painting even faster, and greener—for less. And, we found that a brand's flat, eggshell, and semi-gloss finishes perform similarly overall so we've combined the scores to make it easier to use our Ratings and to shop. The details:

Self-priming paints save work.

All of our top picks let you skip priming. Paints that are self-priming are noted in the Ratings. For most surfaces, one coat of a recommended paint should be enough to hide most colors beneath.

You get what you pay for. Budget paint may cost less up front, but you'll end up putting on more coats for better hiding.

Lower emissions. More manufacturers are claiming that their paint is free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), though the tints used to color the bases might have some VOCs. Those solvents, released into the air as paint dries, are linked to respiratory problems and air pollution. Most paint companies now say that their products contain 50 or fewer grams of VOCs per liter and some we tested claim not to have any VOCs. But even those "green" formulations might not be entirely odor-free.

In a busy, sometimes messy space like a kitchen, it's important to pick a paint that will hold up to frequent cleaning. Check the "scrubbing" category in our Ratings to help you make the right choice.



BENJAMIN MOORE



JOHN GRUEN (RIGHT)



How to choose

Start shopping online.

Manufacturer and retailer websites and Facebook pages offer a wealth of tips on choosing colors, including photo galleries of finished rooms and calculators to help you figure out how much paint you'll need. They're also good places to check for such deals as free samples, moving discounts, and special deals if you don't like the color you've painted.

Get the color perfect.

Certain hues are specific to a brand. But retailers can often match colors. With paint-color formula books

and color-matching computer technology, you don't have to rely on the skills of a sales clerk, though one with a good eye and mixing equipment with clean nozzles might be able to match colors, too. Because the paint base and sheen can differ slightly among brands, be sure to have the salesperson put a dab of the color on the paint chip or sample you've taken with you, then allow it to dry. Many retailers keep a hair dryer on hand for just that purpose.

Choose the right sheen.

The best low-luster satin

and eggshell paints offer easy hiding and durability, making them ideal for most surfaces. Flat paints hide flaws better but are less resistant to stains and smudges, so do not use them in kitchens. Semigloss works well for trim, shelves and cabinets. But choose a semigloss that scored Very Good or Excellent in our gloss-change test to be sure that the shine won't dull with repeated cleanings. And select one that also did well in our sticking test, so cabinet doors and drawers won't stick shut, even after the paint is dry.

Ratings

All tested paint brands in performance order.

INTERIOR PAINTS														
Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS					RESISTS			FEATURES	
					Hiding	Staining	Gloss Change	Scrubbing	Surface Smoothness	Mildew	Sticking	Fading	Self-priming	Claims Zero VOCs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Behr Marquee (Home Depot)	\$43	81	●	●	○	●	○	●	●		●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Valspar Reserve (Lowe's)	\$44	79	●	●	●	●	○	●	●		●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Behr Premium Plus Ultra (Home Depot)	\$34	78	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Clark + Kensington Enamel (Ace)	\$32	76	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Benjamin Moore Aura	\$54	74	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Valspar Signature (Lowe's)	\$34	73	●	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	Valspar Ultra (Lowe's)	\$29	72	●	○	●	●	○	●	●		●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	Behr Premium Plus Enamel (Home Depot)	\$28	71	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	9	True Value EasyCare Ultra Premium	\$24	67	●	○	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
	10	Olympic One (Lowe's)	\$27	67	●	●	●	●	○	●			●	
	11	Benjamin Moore Natura	\$57	67	●	●	○	●	○	●				●
	12	Benjamin Moore Regal Select	\$54	65	●	●	○	●	●	●		●	●	●
	13	True Value EasyCare Platinum Enamel	\$35	64	○	○	○	●	●	●	●		●	●
	14	Glidden Duo (Home Depot)	\$25	63	●	●	●	●	○	●		●	●	
	15	Olympic ICON (Lowe's)	\$25	62	○	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
	16	Sherwin-Williams Emerald	\$63	61	●	○	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
	17	Sherwin-Williams Duration Home	\$61	61	●	○	○	●	○	●			●	
	18	Ace Royal Interiors	\$27	60	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		
	19	Glidden High Endurance (Walmart)	\$23	60	●	●	●	●	○			●		●
	20	Glidden High Endurance Plus (Walmart)	\$24	55	●	●	○	●	●	●		●	●	●
	21	Glidden Premium (Home Depot)	\$25	54	○	●	○	●	○		●	●	●	●
	22	Farrow & Ball Interior	\$105	52	●	●	●	●	○		●	●		●
	23	Color Place Interior (Walmart)	\$17	43	○	●	●	●	○		●			

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE is mainly hiding, surface smoothness, and resistance to staining, scrubbing, gloss change, sticking, mildew, and fading. Results reflect white, pastel, and medium-tint bases. **HIDING** is coverage of contrasting color mainly with one coat. **STAINING** is resistance to water- and oil-based stains. **GLOSS CHANGE** is appearance change after rough cleaning. **SCRUBBING** is ability to resist an abrasive cleaner. **SMOOTHNESS** is the absence of roller marks when dry. **RESISTS MILDEW** is the ability to inhibit mildew growth. **RESISTS STICKING** is ability to resist tackiness when dry. **RESISTS FADING** is resistance to lightening from sun rays passing through a window. **PRICE** is approximate retail per gallon.



Instead of an expensive tile installation on the backsplash, consider painting the wall in a feature color, like this watery blue.

VALSPAR RESERVE

HAVE PAINTING QUESTIONS? OUR EXPERTS HAVE THE ANSWERS.

How should I paint the ceiling?

A After removing dust and dirt, use a small sash brush with flagged or split ends to cut in a strip of 2 inches or so around the edges of the ceiling. When choosing a brush, note that synthetic bristles tend to hold latex-based paint better and apply it more evenly than natural bristles. Then switch to a roller with an extension pole. Start in a corner and work across the shorter dimension of the room. For even coverage, paint a “W” or “M” pattern about 3 feet wide with the roller, then fill in the gaps. (The process works for walls, too.)

How can I prevent roller marks?

A Avoid cheap rollers with obvious seams. Synthetic, short-napped rollers work best on most walls, ceilings, and trim. Use longer-nap rollers for textured walls. Steel frames with lots of tines will be stiffer and sturdier, and sealed ends will keep the paint on the roller. Be sure to give a new roller a rubdown before use to remove any lint. The paint you use matters, too, so look for high smoothness scores in our Ratings.

What if I missed a spot?

A After the paint dries, usually in about 4 hours, touch it up. If you do it before the paint dries, you’ll mess up the paint surrounding the bare spot.



Painter’s tape can help you create crisp lines between colors or around trim. In our tests, FrogTape Delicate Surface Tape, \$6 to \$9, was easy to use and didn’t damage surfaces.

Can I fix paint runs?

A Once the paint is dry, use fine sandpaper to remove the run, then retouch with a little paint. Runs can be a sign that you’re loading too much paint on the roller or brush or not spreading it well.

Can I trash unused paint?

A You should always keep a little for touch-ups. Pour it into a small container and label it with the paint color and

number, and the room it was used in. You can try contacting local charities, religious organizations, or high school or college drama departments to ask whether they can use extra paint, or check whether your community collects it for reuse. If you don’t find any takers, follow local waste requirements for proper disposal (such as taking the lid off latex paint and letting it dry before disposing of the can).

WHIRLPOOL



Today's refrigerators are available in a range of configurations. When shopping, consider your family's habits to pick the style that will suit you best.

Refrigerators

Our top-Rated refrigerators boast more food storage space and more flexible features than ever before.

JUST AS KITCHENS are becoming more social, so too are refrigerators. Indeed, some of the latest models have party-enhancing features, such as Bluetooth-enabled sound systems, wine-chilling compartments, and dispensers that serve more than just water. But it's the day-in, day-out performance that matters most, and that's what our tests are designed to capture.

Four-door models flood the market. Most of these models feature a middle drawer, often with separate temperature controls.

Samsung introduced the first truly four-door model, the Samsung T9000, which has abundant usable capacity, along with outstanding overall performance.

Fridges are bigger, with more features. Space ranks right up there with style on most shoppers' refrigerator wish lists. We're seeing more models that claim over 30 cubic feet of capacity, and some boast upwards of 33 cubic feet. High-end features, such as temperature-controlled drawers, adjustable shelves, split shelves,

and internal water dispensers, are increasingly available on even the most affordable refrigerators.

But small is beautiful, too. We're also seeing more refrigerators designed for smaller spaces. Column refrigerators, which range from about 18 to 30 inches wide and don't include a freezer, fit spots too narrow for most refrigerator-freezers. You can also pair one with a column freezer, available in similar widths, for added flexibility. Manufacturers are also squeezing a bottom-freezer design into a svelte 30-inch width.

Tip

When not filled with everyday essentials, wide, shallow drawers like this one can be used to hold full-sized catering platters.





LG STUDIO

Details that count

● WATER FILTER

It can remove small particles or contaminants such as lead and chlorine, and impurities that cause bad tastes or odors. You can also add a filter to the refrigerator's water-supply line.

● DIGITAL CONTROLS WITH TEMPERATURE READOUTS

These are more precise than dial controls and can include readouts in degrees for the refrigerator and the freezer compartments.

● LED LIGHTING

LEDs take up less space than incandescent lightbulbs, use less energy, and can be placed to uniformly light the interior.

● SPECIAL SHELVES

Adjustable door bins and shelves move to create room to fit tall items. Elevator shelves let you crank them up and down without removing their contents. Pull-out shelves or bins improve access to stored items. Split shelves allow you to adjust them to different heights independently.

● THROUGH-THE-DOOR DISPENSERS

Ice and water dispensers are included in some French-door models and in almost all side-by-sides. Our latest reliability survey indicates that refrigerators with this convenient feature are slightly more repair-prone than those without it.

● DUAL EVAPORATORS

This now-common feature helps maintain optimum temperature and moisture levels inside the fresh-food section of the refrigerator. It should also prevent strong food odors from migrating between the refrigerator and freezer compartments.

● MULTIMEDIA COMBOS

As the kitchen becomes the new living room, more manufacturers are hawking \$3,000-plus refrigerators that incorporate high-tech equipment such as TVs, digital-picture or music devices, and family-organizing centers. You can save hundreds and get better performance by buying such equipment separately.

● DRAWERS THAT CONTROL HUMIDITY

Crisper drawers are available in all but basic refrigerator models, some with controls that maintain optimum humidity levels. Some models also have temperature-controlled drawers that you can set cooler than the rest of the refrigerator. (You might want to keep meat, fish, and cold cuts at lower temperatures.) Some drawers can also chill or thaw their contents quickly.



How to choose

Check the specs.

Make sure the refrigerator fits your kitchen. Remember to factor in the door swing in relation to adjacent walls, cabinets, and other appliances. And leave at least a 1-inch clearance around the unit and the surrounding cabinetry to ensure adequate air flow.

Consider your food-shopping habits.

Do you do a big weekly shop or like to stock up on bulk purchases? Then you may need a larger capacity than the 19 to 22 claimed cubic feet that most manufacturers suggest for a typical family of four.

Use EnergyGuide labels wisely.

Don't look for the Energy Star alone, since efficiency standards vary by refrigerator type. A non-Energy Star-qualified top-freezer might actually be more efficient than a side-by-side with the label. For an apples-to-apples comparison, use the annual operating costs and the kilowatt-hours per year the refrigerator uses, which are listed on

the yellow EnergyGuide label. The label has been updated to reflect a new federal energy standard that took effect January 1, 2014. In general, models manufactured after that date will be more efficient than earlier ones. You can also check our Ratings, which are consistent between types, for efficiency and energy costs.

Don't be afraid to haggle.

Those who did saved about \$100 on a large appliance, according to our latest reader survey of retailers. Checking market prices will help you negotiate, though basic courtesy often goes further with salespeople than hardball tactics. And skip extended warranties.

Consider shopping online.

While most major appliances are still bought at walk-in stores, online sales continue to climb. But you may still want to go to a showroom to check fit, finish, and features, and give the retailer a chance to match an online price. For more tips, see "Shopping for Appliances," p. 132.

Product guide



↓ BOTTOM-FREEZER

Pros French-door and bottom-freezer models keep refrigerated food at eye level, and offer the space-saving door swing of a side-by-side and the option of opening only half of the refrigerator at a time. Four-door versions add the convenience of an extra refrigerator or freezer drawer. More now have indoor ice and water dispensers.

Cons You have to bend to reach the freezer compartment, though you'll typically use the refrigerator more often. Bottom-freezer fridges cost more than top-freezers overall. French-door and four-door models can cost even more and can be hard to find in narrow widths. Be wary of models with through-the-door ice and water dispensers, an admittedly convenient feature that can require pricey repairs.

↓ SIDE-BY-SIDE

Pros The narrow doors are a plus in a space-challenged kitchen.

Cons Most doors don't open wide enough for a pizza box or other wide items, and tall, narrow compartments make items toward the back hard to find—concerns that have helped boost sales of French-door bottom-freezer models. Side-by-sides are usually not as energy- or space-efficient.

↓ CABINET-DEPTH

Pros These stick out only a bit farther than built-in models and deliver their integrated, upscale look for far less cost. Most come as side-by-sides, but top- and bottom-freezers and French-door models are available.

Cons Cabinet-depth models have less usable space than deeper freestanding models and cost more overall than other freestanding fridges.

↓ TOP-FREEZER

Pros They usually offer the most storage for their size, and fairly wide refrigerator shelves make it easy to reach the back. They also cost the least as a group, yet they offer stainless trim on many models for a more stylish look.

Cons You have to bend to reach lower shelves and drawers, and the wide-swinging door requires sufficient clearance between adjacent surfaces.



RECOMMENDED MODELS

Top-freezers



A1 HAIER HT21TS45SW

Size tested 66Hx32Wx32D

Price \$800

✓ **CR Best Buy**

This 20.7-cu.-ft. model delivers exceptional value, with its solid temperature performance and exceptional energy efficiency. Inside, it offers gallon door storage and spillproof shelves. It's also available in stainless steel.

haier.com/us



A2 FRIGIDAIRE FFHT2126PS

Size tested 69Hx30Wx32D

Price \$800

This model is one of our highest-rated top-freezers, thanks to its solid temperature and energy efficiency. It also serves up nearly 17 feet of usable capacity, impressive for this type of refrigerator. The interior is basic box design.

frigidaire.com



A3 HAIER HT21TS77SP

Size tested 67Hx32Wx32D

Price \$700

This model proves that you can have very good temperature performance for well under \$1,000. Energy efficiency is also exceptional. While not brimming with features, this model comes with gallon door storage and split shelves, helping its 17.6 cubic feet of usable capacity feel bigger.

haier.com/us

Bottom-freezers: conventional



B1 KENMORE ELITE 79043

Size tested 69Hx33Wx33D

Price \$1,510

Superb temperature performance and exceptional energy efficiency and noise level helped this 23.8-cu.-ft. model earn a top spot on our recommended list.

Other pluses include digital shelves, spillproof shelves, and a door-open alarm.

kenmore.com



B2 LG LDC24370ST

Size tested 69Hx33Wx33D

Price \$1,650

This model boasts 17.1 cubic feet of total usable capacity, along with excellent temperature performance, energy efficiency, and noise level. It includes digital controls, spillproof shelves, and a door-open alarm.

lg.com



B3 KENMORE ELITE 79023

Size tested 70Hx33Wx31D

Price \$1,450

This 21.8-cu.-ft. (15.9 actual) model provides excellent temperature performance and energy efficiency. Other pluses include spillproof shelves, digital controls, and a door-open alarm.

kenmore.com

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Bottom-freezers: French door



C1 GE PROFILE PWE23KMD5

Size tested 69Hx36Wx29D

Price \$2,600

This quiet, cabinet-depth model provides exceptional temperature control and energy efficiency. It offers an internal water dispenser, dual evaporators, a built-in water filter, spillproof shelves, and a temp-controlled meat/deli bin. geappliances.com



C2 LG LFX32945ST

Size tested 69Hx36Wx35D

Price \$3,330

This 22-cu.-ft. model provides a door-in-door compartment, allowing you to access drinks, condiments, and other often-needed items without reaching into the main chamber. It provides superb performance in our tests of temperature control, energy efficiency, and noise. lg.com



C3 SAMSUNG RF30HDEDTSR

Size tested 69Hx36Wx35D

Price \$3,000

This 30.2-cu.-ft. model provides top-rated temperature performance, energy efficiency and noise level. It features a door-in-door compartment, an external water dispenser, dual evaporators, built-in water filter, ice storage in its refrigerator, and digital controls. samsung.com



C4 KENMORE ELITE 7160[3]

Size tested 69Hx36Wx32D

Price \$1,700

✓ **CR Best Buy**

This fridge, with 25 cubic feet of storage, is one of the most energy-efficient models in its category. It has pull-out shelves and bins, a temperature-controlled meat/deli compartment, and touchpad controls. It's one of the quietest models in our Ratings. kenmore.com



C5 LG LFX33975ST

Size tested 69Hx36Wx35D

Price \$3,000

Boasting 33 claimed cubic feet of storage, this spacious model offers digital controls, spillproof shelves, gallon door storage, and external ice and water dispensers. lg.com



C6 LG LFX29937ST

Size tested 69Hx36Wx34D

Price \$2,700

This models provides exceptional temperature control, energy efficiency, and noise. Helpful features include an extra-tall ice and water dispenser that make it easy to fill oversized containers. Inside, dual evaporators should help keep food fresh by maintaining optimal humidity levels. lg.com



**Expert's
PICK**

Bottom-freezers: four door

“A top-rated four-door model, the Samsung Chef Collection RF34H9960S4 bottom-freezer refrigerator, has 23.4 cubic feet of usable capacity, the most of any fridge we’ve tested. One particularly cool feature: The user can convert the lower-right compartment from freezer to fridge with the touch of a button.”

—Joe Pacella, Project Leader, Consumer Reports

D1 SAMSUNG CHEF COLLECTION RF34H9960S4

Size tested 73Hx36Wx36D

Price \$5,400

samsung.com



D2 SAMSUNG T9000 RF32FMQDBSR

Size tested 72Hx36Wx36D

Price \$3,500

This model offers 22.9 cubic feet of usable capacity, which is among the most we’ve ever measured. It’s a true four-door refrigerator, with an upper fresh-food section behind traditional French-doors and two side-by-side bottom freezer compartments, one of which can convert to an additional refrigerator chamber. samsung.com

Most & least reliable brands

Almost 80,000 owners sound off

BOTTOM FREEZERS

ICEMAKER	
Samsung	18%
Kenmore	19%
LG	19%
GE	19%
Maytag	22%
Whirlpool	25%
KitchenAid	26%
Frigidaire	35%
Electrolux	45%
NO ICEMAKER	
Kenmore	12%
GE	15%
Whirlpool	21%
Amana	24%

TOP FREEZERS

ICEMAKER	
Kenmore	13%
Maytag	15%
Frigidaire	16%
GE	19%
Whirlpool	19%
NO ICEMAKER	
Kenmore	10%
Whirlpool	11%
GE	11%
Frigidaire	12%

SIDE-BY-SIDES WITH ICEMAKER

GE	18%
Kenmore	20%
Frigidaire	21%
Whirlpool	21%
Maytag	22%
LG	22%
Samsung	23%
KitchenAid	29%

Source: Consumer Reports Annual Product Reliability Survey. Our findings are based on nearly 80,000 full-size, free-standing refrigerators that consumers bought new between 2010 and 2014. Each rate represents the percentage of refrigerators that were repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 5 points aren’t meaningful. Models within a brand may vary, and design and manufacture changes may affect future reliability.

Side-by-sides



E1 SAMSUNG RS25H5121SR

Size tested 69Hx36Wx34D

Price \$1,900

This 24.5-cu.-ft. (claimed) model offers outstanding temperature performance, energy efficiency, and quiet operation. It's also loaded with features, including an innovative ice and water dispenser and dual evaporators.

samsung.com



E2 SAMSUNG RH29H8000SR

Size tested 70Hx36Wx34D

Price \$2,500

This 28.5-cu.-ft. refrigerator has an external water dispenser, a built-in water filter, an air filter, spillproof shelves, digital temperature controls, and dual evaporators. A very quiet model, it provides very good temperature and energy-efficiency.

samsung.com



E3 LG LSC2291ST

Size tested 69Hx36Wx30D

Price \$2,700

This 21.6-cu.-ft. cabinet-depth model combines very good temperature control and quietness with superb energy efficiency. The upper-right quadrant of the fridge is actually a door-in-door compartment that opens with the press of a button.

lg.com



Tip

A side-by-side model is a particularly good choice in a tight space, where the wider door swing of a top-freezer or standard bottom-freezer could obstruct passageways or make it difficult to open cabinet or dishwasher doors. Whichever style of fridge you choose, be sure to take careful measurements to ensure adequate clearance for the doors.

REPAIR OR REPLACE?

The survey examined products through the first eight years of ownership.

Top-freezer

1-4 yr.	5-7 yr.	8+ yr.
REPAIR	CONSIDER REPAIR	REPLACE

Median repair cost \$152

TIP Top-freezers are the least expensive type; if your fridge is 5 to 7 years old, you should lean toward replacing it.

Bottom-freezer

1-6 yr.	7-8 yr.
REPAIR	CONSIDER REPAIR

Median repair cost \$216

TIP Models with an icemaker fail more often than those without one.

Side-by-side

1-5 yr.	6-8 yr.
REPAIR	CONSIDER REPAIR

Median repair cost \$194

TIP Side-by-sides are the most finicky type of refrigerator.

Built-ins



F1 THERMADOR FREEDOM COLLECTION T36BB820SS

Size tested 84Hx36Wx25D

Price \$7,400

This 20-cu.-ft. model provides excellent temperature and noise performance, and very good energy efficiency. It has dual compressors, dual evaporators, a door-open alarm, a built-in water filter, and digital temperature controls.
thermador.com



F2 JENN-AIR JS42PPDUB[SS]

Size tested 84Hx42Wx26D

Price \$7,200

This 25.3-cu.-ft. model offers very good temperature performance, superb energy efficiency, and quiet operation. It has a temp-controlled meat and deli bin. It also has through-the-door ice and water dispensers; this refrigerator can't accept an integrated panel.
jenn-air.com



F3 BOSCH INTEGRA 800 SERIES B36BT830NS

Size tested 84Hx36Wx25D

Price \$7,500

This 20-cu.-ft. model provides excellent temperature and noise performance, but energy efficiency is only good. It has dual compressors, dual evaporators, a door-open alarm, a built-in water filter, and digital controls.
boschappliances.com



F4 THERMADOR FREEDOM COLLECTION T36BT810NS

Size tested 84Hx36Wx25D

Price \$8,000

This 20-cu.-ft. cabinet-depth model provides excellent temperature and noise performance, and good energy efficiency. It has dual compressors, dual evaporators, a door-open alarm, a built-in water filter, and digital controls.
thermador.com



F5 THERMADOR KBUDT4265E[S]

Size tested 84Hx42Wx26D

Price \$8,750

This model combines very good temperature performance and energy efficiency. It has through-the-door ice and water dispensers, so the refrigerator can't accept an integrated panel. It comes with a temperature-controlled meat/deli bin and gallon door storage.
thermador.com



F6 SUB-ZERO BI42S[S]

Size tested 84Hx42Wx26D

Price \$8,000

This 24.1-cu.-ft. model provides excellent temperature performance; energy efficiency, and noise and crisper performance are very good. It has a chemical air-scrubber, dual compressors, dual evaporators, a door-open alarm, a built-in water filter, spill-proof shelves, and digital controls that show actual temperature.
subzero-wolf.com

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

A. TOP FREEZERS

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results												Features		
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-Look Option	
✓	1	Haier HT21TS45SW	\$800	65	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	53	17.5	12.7	4.8	67	32	32	20.7		●	
✓	2	Frigidaire FFHT2126PS	\$850	64	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	55	16.9	12.1	4.8	69	30	32	20.5		●	
✓	3	Haier HT21TS77SP	\$700	63	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	47	17.6	12.7	4.9	67	32	32	20.7		●	
✓	4	Haier HT18TS77SP	\$600	63	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	41	15.4	11	4.4	66	30	31	18.2		●	
✓	5	Frigidaire Gallery FGHT2132PF	\$950	63	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	52	16.2	11.4	4.8	70	30	32	20.5		●	
✓	6	Frigidaire LFHT2117L[W] (Lowe's)	\$700	62	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	55	17.1	12.3	4.8	69	30	34	20.5		●	
✓	7	Kenmore 79433	\$1,400	62	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	54	19.4	13.8	5.6	69	33	32	23.5	int.	●	
✓	8	Maytag M1TXEGMY[W]	\$770	62	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	59	16.7	10.9	5.8	66	33	31	20.4		●	
	9	Frigidaire LFHT1817L[W] (Lowe's)	\$600	61	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	47	15.4	11.8	3.6	66	30	32	18.2		●	
	10	Kenmore 78032	\$1,200	61	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	52	19.6	14	5.6	69	33	32	23.7		●	
	11	LG LTC20380ST	\$1,000	61	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	46	16.4	11.4	5	66	30	32	20.2		●	
	12	Kenmore 7882[2]	\$650	60	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	51	14.7	11.2	3.5	66	30	31	18.2		●	
	13	Ikea Energisk B18W	\$500	59	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	52	13.7	9.9	3.8	69	28	32	17.6		●	
	14	Daewoo FRG-1830BRW	\$750	44	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	67	14.5	10	4.5	67	30	31	18		●	
	15	Maytag M1BXGMY[M]	\$950	32	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	52	17.7	11.7	6	66	30	33	21.1		●	

B. CONVENTIONAL BOTTOM-FREEZERS

✓	1	Kenmore Elite 79043	\$1,510	83	●	●	●	○	59	17.1	12.3	4.8	69	33	33	23.8		●
✓	2	LG LDC24370ST	\$1,650	83	●	●	●	○	59	17.1	12.3	4.8	69	33	33	23.8		●
✓	3	Kenmore Elite 79023	\$1,450	81	●	●	●	○	58	15.8	10.9	4.9	69	30	34	21.8		●
✓	4	Kenmore 69313	\$950	80	●	●	●	●	44	13.4	8.9	4.5	66	30	31	18.5		●
✓	5	Whirlpool WRB322DMBM	\$1,400	77	●	●	○	●	54	14.9	10.7	4.2	69	33	31	22.1		●
✓	6	Whirlpool Gold GB2FHD[XW][Q]	\$1,200	73	●	●	●	●	52	15.3	11.1	4.2	70	33	31	21.9		●
✓	7	Amana ABB2221WE[W]	\$1,000	73	●	●	○	●	56	16.5	11.4	5.1	70	33	32	21.9		●
✓	8	Maytag MBF2258XE[W]	\$1,100	73	●	●	○	●	52	15.4	11.3	4.1	70	33	31	21.9		●
✓	9	Amana ABB2224BRM	\$1,250	72	●	●	○	●	56	15.3	11.1	4.2	69	33	31	21.9		●
✓	10	Maytag MBF1958XE[W]	\$1,150	72	●	●	○	●	50	12.8	9.2	3.6	67	30	31	18.5		●
	11	Samsung RB215AC[PN]	\$1,350	71	●	●	●	○	65	15	10.6	4.4	69	32	30	19.7		●
	12	Whirlpool GB9FHD[XW][S]	\$1,500	71	●	●	●	●	50	12.3	9.1	3.2	66	30	32	18.5		●
	13	LG LDC22720[SW]	\$1,300	71	●	●	●	●	61	15.8	11.3	4.5	69	33	33	22.4		●
	14	Amana ABB1924BRM	\$1,220	71	●	●	○	●	51	12.5	8.9	3.6	66	30	31	18.5		●
	15	Whirlpool EB9SHK[XV][Q]	\$1,050	69	●	●	○	●	56	13.5	9.2	4.3	67	30	31	18.5		●
	16	Kenmore 7827[2]	\$1,050	68	●	●	●	●	66	17.1	11.5	5.6	68	33	33	22.4		●

✓ CR Best Buy ✓ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE is based primarily on temperature performance and energy efficiency. Noise and ease of use are also considered. **TEMPERATURE PERFORMANCE** denotes performance at different room temperatures, including high heat, and how uniformly each model maintained 37° F in the refrigerator and 0° F in the freezer. **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** is energy consumption per usable cubic foot of storage as observed in the energy test we perform in-house at 37° F in the refrigerator and 0° F in the freezer. **NOISE** is with compressors running. **EASE OF USE** assesses features and design, including layout, controls, and lighting. **ENERGY COST/YR. (\$)** is the estimated cost in dollars based on the current year's average national electricity rate. Your cost will vary depending on the rate for electricity in your area. **FRIDGE AND FREEZER USABLE CAPACITY** is our measurement of usable refrigerator and freezer space. **HEIGHT, WIDTH, and DEPTH** are without the model's handle, rounded up to the nearest inch (37-inch-wide freestanding models fit in 36-inch openings). **CLAIMED CAPACITY** is the manufacturer's measurement of cubic feet. Under **BRAND & MODEL**, bracketed letters or numbers are color codes. **PRICE** is approximate retail.

B. CONVENTIONAL BOTTOM-FREEZERS continued

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results										Features			
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-look Option
	17	Samsung RB195AC[PN]	\$1,250	68	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟡	65	13.8	9.9	3.9	69	32	29	17.9		●
	18	KitchenAid KBRS19KCMS	\$1,700	67	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟡	63	12.1	8.6	3.5	67	30	31	18.7		●
	19	Blomberg BRFB1800SSIM	\$1,800	67	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟡	57	13.6	9.8	3.8	68	30	30	16.2		●
	20	Amana ABB1921WE[W]	\$850	67	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	69	13.2	9	4.2	68	30	31	18.5		●
	21	Kenmore 7900[2]	\$900	67	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	66	15	9.9	5.1	68	30	33	19.7		
	22	GE GDE23ESESS	\$1,700	65	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	71	17	12.7	4.3	68	36	33	23.1		●
	23	Bosch B11CB50SSS	\$2,150	62	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	38	8.4	5.8	2.6	79	24	26	11.3		●
	24	GE Artistry ABE20EGWS	\$1,100	58	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	60	14.9	10.4	4.5	67	30	33	20.3		●
	25	Fisher & Paykel RF175WCRUX1	\$2,000	48	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟡	65	12.4	9.4	3	69	33	28	17.5	ext.	●
	26	Haier HBQ18JAD[W]	\$900	43	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	76	14.9	10.4	4.5	66	30	32	17.5		

C. THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR BOTTOM-FREEZERS

✓	1	Kenmore Elite 74093	\$3,400	85	●	●	●	●	74	21.5	15.4	6.1	69	36	36	31.7	ext.	●
✓	2	GE Profile PWE23KMDDES	\$2,600	84	●	●	●	●	47	16	11.1	4.9	69	36	29	23.1	int.	●
✓	3	LG LFX32945ST	\$3,330	84	●	●	●	●	71	21.6	14.9	6.7	69	36	35	32	ext.	●
✓	4	Samsung RF28HFPDBSR	\$2,700	83	●	●	●	●	56	20	13.3	6.7	69	36	34	28.1	ext.	●
✓	5	Samsung RF30HDEDTSR	\$3,000	83	●	●	●	●	81	20.9	14.1	6.8	69	36	35	30.2	ext.	●
✓	6	Kenmore 7160[3]	\$1,700	83	●	●	●	○	52	17.5	12.5	5	69	36	32	25		●
✓	7	LG LFX33975ST	\$3,000	83	●	●	●	●	71	22.3	15.6	6.7	69	36	35	32.5	ext.	●
✓	8	LG LFX29937ST	\$2,700	83	●	●	●	●	63	18.7	12.6	6.1	69	36	34	29.2	ext.	●
✓	9	Whirlpool Gold GX5FHTXV[Q]	\$1,600	82	●	●	○	●	60	16.2	11.6	4.6	70	36	33	24.8	●	●
✓	10	Samsung RF28HDEDBSR	\$2,400	82	●	●	●	●	62	20	13.3	6.7	69	36	34	27.8	ext.	●
✓	11	LG LFX29927ST	\$2,350	82	●	●	●	●	79	19.3	13.1	6.2	70	36	34	29.2	ext.	●
✓	12	Samsung RF26HFPNBSR	\$2,300	82	●	●	○	●	55	18.3	13.3	5	69	36	33	25.5	int.	●
✓	13	LG LFC24770ST	\$1,700	81	●	●	●	●	55	17.4	12.6	4.8	69	33	33	23.8		●
✓	14	Samsung RFG298HD[RS] (Lowe's)	\$2,800	81	●	●	●	●	74	18.6	12.7	5.9	69	36	35	28.5	ext.	●
✓	15	LG LFC25776[SW]	\$1,650	81	●	●	●	○	51	18	13	5	70	36	33	25		●
✓	16	Kenmore Elite 74033	\$3,100	81	●	●	●	●	68	19.1	13.1	6	69	36	34	29.6	ext.	●
✓	17	Samsung RF323TEDB[SR]	\$3,300	80	●	●	●	○	73	21.8	14.7	7.1	69	36	36	31.6	ext.	●
✓	18	Kenmore Elite 72193	\$4,150	80	●	●	●	●	77	21.7	15	6.7	69	36	35	32	ext.	●
✓	19	LG LFXS29766S	\$3,400	79	●	●	●	●	75	19.6	12.8	6.8	69	36	35	28.5	ext.	●
✓	20	LG LFX31925[ST]	\$2,900	79	●	●	●	●	73	19.4	13.4	6	69	36	34	31	ext.	●
✓	21	Kenmore Elite 71313	\$1,600	79	●	●	●	○	59	17.4	12.6	4.8	69	33	33	23.9		●
	22	GE Cafe CFE29TSDSS	\$3,000	78	●	●	●	●	72	19.6	13.2	6.4	69	36	36	28.6	ext.	●
	23	Bosch 800 Series B22FT80SNS	\$1,800	78	●	●	●	●	51	15.5	11.2	4.3	69	33	32	22.1	int.	●
	24	Samsung RF261BEAE[SR]	\$1,700	78	●	●	○	●	57	18.6	13.4	5.2	69	36	35	25.5	int.	●
	25	LG LFC25765[ST]	\$1,800	78	●	●	●	○	60	17.9	12.6	5.3	69	33	34	25		●
	26	Kenmore Elite 7205[3]	\$3,200	78	●	●	●	●	75	19.4	13.4	6	71	36	35	31	ext.	●
	27	LG LFX25991[ST]	\$3,200	77	●	●	●	●	60	14	9.5	4.5	69	36	29	24.5	ext.	●
	28	Whirlpool WRF532SMBM	\$1,600	77	●	●	●	●	50	15.2	10.9	4.3	69	33	32	21.7		●
	29	Kenmore 70333	\$2,500	77	●	●	●	●	75	16.4	11.4	4.9	69	36	32	23.9	ext.	●
	30	Samsung RF28HFEDBSR	\$2,650	77	●	●	●	●	88	20	13.3	6.7	69	36	34	28.1	ext.	●
	31	GE GNE26GSDSS	\$1,800	76	●	●	●	●	58	20	13.8	6.2	70	36	34	26.4		●
	32	GE Café CYE23TSDSS	\$3,100	76	●	●	●	●	67	14.7	9.9	4.8	70	36	30	23	ext.	●

Ratings

C. THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR BOTTOM-FREEZERS continued

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results												Features		
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-look Option	
	33	KitchenAid KBFS22ECMS	\$1,800	76	●	●	●	○	51	15.5	11.2	4.3	69	33	32	22.1	int.	●	
	34	GE GFE27GSDSS	\$2,400	75	●	●	○	●	61	17.6	11.9	5.7	69	36	34	26.6	ext.	●	
	35	LG LFX31945[ST]	\$2,800	75	●	●	●	●	79	19	13	6	69	36	34	30.5	ext.	●	
	36	Kenmore Elite 7206[3]	\$2,900	75	●	●	●	●	81	19.1	13.1	6	69	36	34	30.5	ext.	●	
	37	LG LFC22770ST	\$1,800	75	●	●	●	○	71	15.4	11.1	4.3	68	30	33	21.8		●	
	38	Kenmore Elite 74053	\$3,900	75	●	●	●	●	67	15	9.7	5.3	69	36	29	23.5	ext.	●	
	39	Amana AFI2538AE[W]	\$1,800	75	●	●	○	●	72	14.8	10.7	4.1	71	36	32	24.9	●	●	
	40	GE Profile PFE29PSD[SS]	\$2,400	74	●	●	○	●	72	19.6	13.2	6.4	69	36	36	28.6	ext.	●	
	41	Samsung RF221NCTA[SR]	\$1,800	74	●	●	●	○	57	15.6	11.1	4.5	66	30	34	21.6	int.	●	
	42	LG LFX21976[ST]	\$3,000	74	●	○	●	○	63	13.5	9.7	3.8	70	36	28	21	ext.	●	
	43	Kenmore 71323	\$2,100	74	●	●	●	●	62	15.3	11	4.3	68	30	33	21.8	ext.	●	
	44	Samsung RF263BEAE[SR]	\$2,000	74	●	●	●	○	61	17.1	12	5.1	69	36	35	25.6	ext.	●	
	45	Frigidaire Gallery FGHB2878L[P]	\$2,300	74	●	●	●	○	70	17.4	11.8	5.6	70	36	34	27.8	ext.	●	
	46	Frigidaire FFHN2740PS	\$1,800	74	●	●	●	○	54	19.1	13.9	5.2	70	36	34	26.5		●	
	47	Maytag MFT2673BEM	\$2,200	73	●	●	●	●	65	16.5	11.7	4.8	69	36	34	26.1	ext.	●	
	48	Whirlpool WRF535SMBM	\$1,500	73	●	●	●	●	59	17.4	12.5	4.9	69	36	34	24.8		●	
	49	LG LFX25974ST	\$2,200	73	●	●	●	●	71	16.2	11.2	5	69	36	32	24.7	ext.	●	
	50	Frigidaire FFHB2740PS	\$2,100	73	●	●	●	○	74	17.5	12.6	4.9	69	36	34	26.6	ext.	●	
	51	LG LFX25974[ST]	\$2,300	72	●	●	●	○	75	16.2	11.2	5	69	36	33	24.7	ext.	●	
	52	Kenmore 7200[2]	\$1,650	72	●	●	○	○	61	14.6	10.4	4.2	70	33	32	21.7	int.	●	
	53	Bosch 800 Series B22CT80SNS	\$2,700	72	●	●	●	●	54	13.9	10.4	3.5	72	36	29	21.9	int.	●	
	54	Samsung RF217AC[WP]	\$1,450	71	●	○	●	●	68	14.9	10.4	4.5	70	32	30	19.7			
	55	Jenn-Air JFC2290V[EP]	\$2,800	71	●	●	●	○	57	13.5	10.4	3.1	72	36	28	21.8	int.	●	
	56	Kenmore Elite 72373	\$2,400	71	●	●	●	●	72	19.3	13.1	6.2	70	36	34	29	ext.	●	
	57	Maytag MFI2670XE[M]	\$2,300	71	●	●	○	○	67	15.5	11.3	4.2	70	36	33	25.6	ext.	●	
	58	Whirlpool CoolVox WRF991BOOM	\$2,400	70	●	●	●	●	76	16.4	11.7	4.8	69	36	34	26.8	ext.	●	
	59	Maytag MFF2258VE[W]	\$1,500	70	●	●	○	●	63	14.5	10.4	4.1	71	33	32	21.7		●	
	60	KitchenAid KFIV29PCMS	\$3,000	69	●	●	○	●	71	17.6	12.4	5.2	70	36	34	28.6	ext.	●	
	61	Electrolux Wave-Touch EW28BS85K[S]	\$3,200	69	●	●	●	●	80	18.1	11.9	6.2	69	36	34	27.8	ext.	●	
	62	Kenmore Elite 72123	\$2,000	69	●	●	●	○	55	13.3	9.3	4	68	30	33	19.6	ext.	●	
	63	Whirlpool Gold GI6FARXX[Q]	\$1,900	69	●	●	○	○	68	15.5	11.3	4.2	70	36	33	25.6	ext.	●	
	64	Frigidaire Gallery FGHB2866PF	\$1,900	68	●	●	●	○	86	18.6	12.3	6.3	70	36	34	27.8	ext.	●	
	65	Samsung RF23HCEDBSR	\$3,100	68	○	●	●	●	81	16	11.1	4.9	69	36	29	22.5	ext.	●	
	66	Maytag MFF2558DEM	\$1,550	68	●	●	●	●	78	17.2	12.4	4.7	69	36	33	25.2		●	
	67	Whirlpool WRF560SEY[M]	\$1,800	67	●	●	●	○	57	13.3	9.3	4	68	30	33	19.6	ext.	●	
	68	Whirlpool Gold GIOFSAXV[Y]	\$2,800	67	●	○	●	○	60	12.2	9.1	3.1	70	36	29	19.8	ext.	●	
	69	Electrolux EI27BS26J[W]	\$2,200	67	●	●	●	○	75	17.7	12.7	5	70	36	33	26.7	ext.	●	
	70	KitchenAid KFFS20EY[MS]	\$1,900	67	●	●	●	○	57	13.3	9.3	4	68	30	33	19.6	int.	●	
	71	Samsung RF197AC[WP]	\$1,250	67	●	○	●	●	69	13.4	9.5	3.9	70	32	28	17.8		●	
	72	KitchenAid KBFS22EW[WH]	\$1,600	67	●	●	○	○	64	14.6	10.4	4.2	70	33	32	21.7		●	
	73	Bosch B26FT70SN[S]	\$2,650	67	●	○	●	○	84	16.4	11.2	5.2	70	36	33	25.9	ext.	●	

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

C. THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR BOTTOM-FREEZERS continued

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results										Features			
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-look Option
	74	LG LFC28768ST	\$1,900	67	○	●	●	○	79	20.1	14.1	6	69	36	33	27.7		●
	75	Kenmore Elite 74023	\$2,800	67	○	●	●	●	83	19.5	13.5	6	69	36	34	29.8	ext.	●
	76	Viking VCFE236SS	\$3,600	66	●	○	○	○	63	14.1	10.5	3.6	72	36	29	21.8	int.	●
	77	Frigidaire Gallery FGHN2866PF	\$2,100	66	●	●	●	○	85	19.5	13.8	5.7	69	36	31	27.8		●
	78	KitchenAid KFIS29BB[MS]	\$2,900	65	●	○	○	●	85	17.9	12.7	5.2	69	36	34	28.6	ext.	●
	79	Kenmore 70343	\$1,900	65	●	●	○	○	90	18.2	12.2	6	69	36	34	27.1	ext.	●
	80	Whirlpool WRF989SDA[H]	\$2,400	65	●	●	○	●	82	18	12.7	5.3	69	36	34	28.6	ext.	●
	81	Kenmore 70443	\$2,000	64	●	●	○	○	71	14.6	9.9	4.8	69	36	29	21.9	ext.	●
	82	Frigidaire Gallery FGHG2366PF	\$2,400	64	●	○	●	○	74	15.3	11.1	4.2	70	36	29	22.6		●
	83	Maytag MFI2269VE[W]	\$1,900	64	●	●	○	○	73	12.8	9.4	3.4	71	33	32	21.8	ext.	●
	84	Whirlpool Gold GX2FHDV[Q]	\$1,450	63	●	○	○	●	72	13.8	9.7	4.1	70	33	32	21.7		●
	85	GE GNE22GMEES	\$1,700	63	●	●	○	○	68	15.5	11.2	4.3	68	33	33	22.1	int.	●
	86	Electrolux EI27BS16J[W]	\$2,100	63	●	○	●	○	86	19.2	14.2	5	70	36	33	26.6		●
	87	GE Profile PNS20KSESS	\$2,100	62	●	○	○	○	67	12.6	9	3.6	67	30	33	19.5		●
	88	DCS RF195AUUX1	\$3,000	61	●	○	●	○	59	12.5	9.1	3.4	69	36	28	19.5	ext.	●
	89	Kenmore 7130[3]	\$1,700	61	●	●	●	●	66	15.6	11	4.6	68	33	33	22.7		●
	90	Haier HB21FC45NS	\$1,900	59	●	○	●	○	70	14.6	10.1	4.5	70	36	28	20.6		●
	91	Kenmore Elite 72353	\$3,650	57	○	○	●	●	78	14.9	9.9	5	70	36	29	24.5	ext.	●
	92	Viking DDFI36D[SS]	\$3,700	57	●	●	○	○	65	11.7	8.7	3	69	36	28	19.8	ext.	●
	93	Whirlpool WRF540CWBM	\$1,800	54	●	●	●	○	81	13.6	10.2	3.4	69	36	28	20	ext.	●
	94	Frigidaire Gallery FGHF2366PF	\$1,900	52	●	●	●	○	83	13.9	9.7	4.2	70	36	29	22.6	ext.	●
	95	GE PFCS1NFCSS	\$2,700	50	●	●	●	○	72	12.6	9	3.6	70	36	29	20.7		●
	96	Maytag MFT2574DEM	\$1,980	45	●	●	●	●	62	16.4	11.7	4.8	69	36	33	24.7	ext.	●
	97	Maytag MFF2258DEM	\$1,550	43	●	●	○	●	53	15.5	11.2	4.3	69	33	32	22.1		●

D. FOUR-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR BOTTOM-FREEZERS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Samsung Chef Collection RF34H9960S4	\$5,400	84	●	●	●	●	99	23.4	14	9.4	73	36	36	34.3	ext.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Kenmore Elite 72483	\$3,600	84	●	●	●	●	70	21.1	15.4	5.7	69	36	36	29.9	ext.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Samsung T9000 RF32FMQDBSR	\$3,500	83	●	●	●	●	70	22.9	13.7	9.2	72	36	36	31.8	ext.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Samsung RF25HMEDBSR	\$3,000	80	●	●	●	●	66	16.6	11.7	4.9	69	33	34	24.7	ext.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Samsung RF31FMESBSR	\$3,300	79	●	●	●	●	69	19	13	6	69	36	36	30.5	ext.	●
	6	Samsung RF23HSESBSR	\$3,330	76	●	●	●	●	67	15.1	10.5	4.6	69	36	29	22.6	ext.	●
	7	Whirlpool WRX988SIBM	\$2,600	74	●	●	●	●	68	17.9	12.7	5.2	69	36	34	28.1	ext.	●
	8	Samsung RF30HBEDBSR	\$3,200	73	●	●	●	●	75	20.5	13.9	6.6	69	36	36	29.5	ext.	●
	9	KitchenAid KFXS25RY[MS]	\$2,500	71	●	●	○	○	60	16.2	12.1	4.1	70	36	33	25	ext.	●
	10	Kenmore 72383	\$2,400	70	●	●	●	○	70	18	12.9	5.2	69	36	34	28.1		●
	11	Samsung RF24FSEDBSR	\$3,000	66	●	○	●	○	67	14.3	10.2	4.1	69	36	28	23.6	ext.	●
	12	LG LMX28988[ST]	\$2,700	63	●	●	●	○	92	16.6	12.5	4.1	70	36	33	28	ext.	●
	13	Blomberg BRFD2650SS	\$2,700	58	○	●	○	○	85	17.7	11.4	6.3	73	36	34	23.3	ext.	●
	14	Samsung RF28HMELBSR	\$3,250	31	●	●	●	●	158	18.5	13.1	5.4	69	36	34	28.2	ext.	●
	15	GE Profile PVS21KSESS	\$3,100	30	●	●	●	●	120	12.2	9.2	3	69	36	29	20.7	ext.	●

Ratings

E. SIDE BY SIDES

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results												Features		
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-look Option	
✓	1	Samsung RS25H5121SR	\$1,900	83	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	58	18.6	11.8	6.8	69	36	34	24.5	ext.	●	
✓	2	Samsung RH29H8000SR	\$2,500	77	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	71	22.9	14.9	8	69	36	36	28.5	ext.	●	
✓	3	LG LSC22991ST	\$2,700	76	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	53	15.6	11.1	4.5	69	36	30	21.6	ext.	●	
✓	4	Samsung RS22HDPNSR	\$2,400	76	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	76	19.5	14	5.5	69	36	28	22.3	ext.	●	
	5	KitchenAid KSF26C6X[YY]	\$1,950	75	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	75	18.6	12.2	6.4	69	36	34	25.8	ext.	●	
✓	6	Bosch Linea 800 B22CS80SN[S]	\$2,700	74	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	75	14.5	9.5	5	69	36	28	21.7	ext.	●	
✓	7	DCS RX215PJX1	\$2,500	73	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	62	15.7	10.1	5.6	70	36	28	21.5		●	
✓	8	Samsung RH29H9000SR	\$2,350	72	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	73	21.2	13.4	7.8	69	36	36	28.5	ext.	●	
	9	Frigidaire Gallery FGHS2655PF	\$1,350	71	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	63	17.4	11.8	5.6	70	36	34	26	ext.	●	
	10	Whirlpool WRS950SIAM	\$1,900	71	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	98	22	13.6	8.4	70	36	34	29.8	ext.	●	
	11	Kenmore 51783	\$1,250	70	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	67	14.6	9.8	4.8	69	36	29	20.6		●	
	12	Electrolux EI26SS30J[S]	\$1,700	69	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	77	16.1	11.3	4.8	70	36	34	26	ext.	●	
	13	Frigidaire Gallery FGHS2355PF	\$1,500	68	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	59	15.4	10.4	5	69	33	34	22.6	ext.	●	
	14	Samsung RS25H5000SR	\$1,400	68	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	74	18	11.8	6.2	69	36	34	24.5	ext.	●	
	15	Samsung RSG309AA[RS]	\$2,200	68	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	94	22.4	14.3	8.1	70	36	35	29.6	ext.	●	
	16	KitchenAid KSC24C8E[YY]	\$2,500	68	🔴	🟡	🟡	🔴	80	16.2	10.1	6.1	71	36	28	23.9	ext.	●	
	17	GE GSHF6LGBWW	\$1,130	67	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	84	16.5	11.2	5.3	70	36	32	25.9	ext.	●	
	18	GE GSH25JSDSS	\$1,200	67	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	82	16.7	10.7	6	70	36	32	25.3	ext.	●	
	19	Fagor FQ9925XUS	\$2,300	67	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	86	14.5	10.2	4.3	69	36	38	20	ext.	●	
	20	Whirlpool WRL767SIAM	\$1,710	67	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	85	19.4	12.7	6.7	69	36	36	26.5	ext.	●	
	21	Whirlpool WRS321CDBM	\$1,650	66	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	72	13.7	9.9	3.8	69	36	30	21.4	ext.	●	
	22	Kenmore 51133	\$1,600	66	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	83	19.2	12.5	6.7	69	36	34	26.5	ext.	●	
	23	Kenmore Elite 51163	\$1,800	66	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	80	19.4	12.7	6.7	69	36	34	26.5	ext.	●	
	24	Kenmore Elite 51173	\$2,000	66	🟡	🔴	🟡	🔴	101	22	13.6	8.4	69	36	34	29.8	ext.	●	
	25	GE Café CZS25TSESS	\$3,400	65	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	75	14.7	10.5	4.2	72	36	28	26.4	ext.	●	
	26	Frigidaire Gallery FGHC2331PF	\$1,500	65	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	65	15.1	10.1	5	70	36	29	22.6	ext.	●	
	27	Samsung RH22H8010SR	\$2,500	63	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	59	15.5	10.5	5	69	36	29	21.5	ext.	●	
	28	Maytag MSF25D4MDH	\$1,260	62	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	87	16.4	11.1	5.3	69	36	32	24.6	ext.	●	
	29	LG LSC27925ST	\$1,300	62	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	83	16.6	11.3	5.3	69	36	33	26.5	ext.	●	
	30	Samsung RH22H9010SR	\$2,350	60	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	61	15.3	10.3	5	69	36	28	21.5	ext.	●	
	31	Hotpoint HSH25GFB[WW]	\$900	59	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	74	16.8	11.1	5.7	69	36	33	25.3	ext.	●	
	32	Whirlpool WRS571CIDM	\$1,450	59	🔴	🟡	🟡	🟡	83	14.6	9.8	4.8	69	36	32	20.6	ext.	●	
	33	Electrolux EI26SS55G[W]	\$1,800	58	🟡	🟡	🔴	🔴	90	16	10.9	5.1	70	36	33	26	ext.	●	
	34	GE GSHF3KGZWW	\$1,350	58	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	76	15.3	11.4	3.9	69	33	32	23.1	ext.	●	
	35	KitchenAid KSF22C4CYY	\$1,700	55	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	80	13.4	9.1	4.3	66	33	33	22	ext.	●	
	36	Kenmore Elite 5137[3]	\$2,150	54	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟡	67	15.9	10.7	5.2	66	33	33	23.1	ext.	●	
	37	LG LSC23924[SW]	\$1,300	53	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟡	70	14.9	10.5	4.4	67	33	32	22.9	ext.		
	38	Amana ASD2575BRS	\$1,200	52	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	65	15.8	10.6	5.2	69	36	32	25.5	ext.	●	
	39	Whirlpool WSF26C2EX[W]	\$1,050	51	🔴	🟡	🟡	🟡	99	17.4	12.4	5	69	36	33	26.4	ext.	●	
	40	Kenmore 50023	\$1,100	50	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟡	60	13.9	10.1	3.8	66	33	32	25.4	ext.	●	
	41	Whirlpool ED5KVEV[Q]	\$900	48	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	75	15.3	10.1	5.2	70	36	31	25.1	ext.		
	42	Kenmore 50023	\$1,200	48	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	60	15.7	10.6	5.1	69	36	33	25.4	ext.	●	
	43	GE GSE26HMEES	\$1,600	46	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	93	16.5	11.2	5.3	69	36	33	25.9	ext.	●	
	44	Samsung RS261MD[WP]	\$1,200	45	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	71	18.1	12	6.1	70	36	34	25.6	ext.	●	

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

E. SIDE BY SIDES

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS										FEATURES			
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-look Option
	45	Frigidaire FFSS2314QS	\$1,050	45	●	●	●	○	60	15	10.3	4.7	69	33	33	22.6	ext.	●
	46	Kenmore 51123	\$1,100	43	●	●	○	○	67	15.5	10.3	5.2	69	36	33	25.4	ext.	●
	47	Frigidaire FFSS2614QS	\$1,000	43	○	○	○	○	102	18	12.2	5.8	69	36	32	26	ext.	●
	48	GE GSS20GEWW	\$1,450	43	●	●	○	●	76	13.3	9.2	4.1	68	32	32	20	ext.	●
	49	Kenmore Elite 41163	\$1,900	42	●	●	●	●	85	17.3	11	6.3	69	36	29	24.5	ext.	●
	50	Whirlpool WRS576FIDM	\$1,350	42	●	●	○	●	90	18.9	12.3	6.6	69	36	34	26.5	ext.	●
	51	GE GSH22JSDSS	\$1,400	39	●	●	○	○	62	14.1	10	4.1	67	33	32	22.1	ext.	●
	52	Whirlpool WRS325FDAM	\$1,250	37	●	○	○	○	84	15.1	10	5.1	69	36	33	25.4	ext.	●
	53	Samsung RSG257AA[WP]	\$2,000	29	●	●	●	●	100	13.7	8.2	5.5	70	36	28	24.1	ext.	●

F. BUILT-INS

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results												Features					
					Temperature Performance	Energy Efficiency	Noise	Ease of Use	Energy Cost/Yr. (\$)	Total Usable Capacity (cu.ft.)	Fridge Usable Capacity (cu.ft.)	Freezer Usable Capacity (cu.ft.)	Exterior Height (in.)	Exterior Width (in.)	Exterior Depth (in.)	Claimed Capacity (cu.ft.)	Bottom-Freezer	Side-by-side	French-door Style	Water Dispenser	Stainless/SS-look Option	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Thermador Freedom Collection T36BB820SS	\$7,400	80	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	59	14.3	9.8	4.5	84	36	25	20	●				●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Jenn-Air JS42PPDUB[SS]	\$7,200	80	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	73	17.3	12	5.3	84	42	26	25.3		●		ext.	●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Bosch Integra 800 Series B36BT-830NS	\$7,500	78	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	64	13.8	9.2	4.6	84	36	25	20			●		●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Thermador Freedom Collection T36BT810NS	\$8,000	78	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	64	13.8	9.2	4.6	84	36	25	20			●		●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Thermador KBUDT4265E[S]	\$8,750	77	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	78	16	10.6	5.4	84	42	26	25.2		●		ext.	●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Sub-Zero BI42S[S]	\$8,000	76	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	79	18.3	12.3	6	84	42	26	24.1		●			●	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	Miele KF1901Vi	\$7,200	76	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	65	14	10.6	3.4	83	36	24	18.3	●				●	
	8	Jenn-Air JS42SEDUDW	\$7,800	75	🔴	🔴		🔴	84	17.3	11.9	5.4	84	42	26	25.3		●		ext.	●	
	9	Liebherr CS2060	\$5,000	75	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	55	13.9	10.4	3.5	80	36	25	19.5	●				●	
	10	KitchenAid KBFC42F[SS]	\$7,500	73	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	73	16.1	12.2	3.9	84	43	28	22.6	●		●		●	
	11	LG LSSB2791[ST]	\$8,500	73	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	77	17	11	6	84	42	26	26.5			●	ext.	●	
	12	Liebherr CS2062	\$5,300	73	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	51	13.7	10.2	3.5	81	36	25	19.5	●		●		●	
	13	Sub-Zero BI-30U[SS]	\$8,500	73	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	52	12.2	9.7	2.5	83	30	26	17.2	●				●	
	14	Thermador Freedom Collection T30BB820SS	\$7,000	73	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	62	12.2	8.6	3.6	84	30	25	16	●				●	
	15	Bosch Integra B30BB830SS	\$6,500	73	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	62	12.2	8.6	3.6	84	30	25	16	●				●	
	16	Sub-Zero BI36U[S]	\$7,700	71	🔴	🟡	🟡	🔴	75	15.6	12	3.6	84	35	26	21.2	●				●	
	17	Sub-Zero 736TCI	\$8,000	69	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	60	15.8	10.3	5.5	79	36	25	20.6	●				●	
	18	Dacor EF42NB[SS]	\$8,000	69	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	67	18	11.9	6.1	84	42	26	25.3		●			●	
	19	Sub-Zero BI-36UFD[S]	\$9,000	69	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	65	14.4	11.2	3.2	84	36	26	21.1	●		●		●	
	20	GE Monogram ZIC30GNZII	\$7,050	67	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	43	11.5	8.7	2.8	80	30	24	14.1	●				●	
	21	Liebherr HCB1560	\$5,600	67	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	55	10.9	8	2.9	80	30	24	14.1	●				●	
	22	Electrolux Icon E42BS75EP[S]	\$7,600	65	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	97	17.2	11.7	5.5	84	42	26	25.2		●		●	●	
	23	GE Monogram ZISP420DX[SS]	\$8,400	61	🟡	🟡	🟡	🔴	82	16.1	11.5	4.6	84	42	27	25.5		●		ext.	●	
	24	Kenmore Pro 4048[3]	\$6,500	61	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	110	19.5	12.9	6.6	84	48	26	29.5		●		●	●	
	25	Viking Professional VCSB5421SS	\$8,300	54	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟡	84	17.2	11	6.2	84	42	25	24		●			●	
	26	KitchenAid KSSS36QT[X]	\$6,900	54	🟡	🟡	🔴	🔴	70	13.6	9.6	4	84	36	25	20.9		●		ext.	●	
	27	GE Profile PSB42YSX[SS]	\$5,900	45	🟡	🟡	🟡	🔴	97	16.3	11	5.3	84	42	24	25.2		●		ext.	●	
	28	Fhiaba Series MG Stand Plus MG8991TST6/3U	\$10,000	27	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	98	13.1	10.1	3	84	36	24	18	●					

Ranges

The best new ranges offer top performance for every fuel type, cooking style, and budget.

GOOD NEWS: You don't necessarily have to spend more to get more. Our tests show that some of the best-performing models cost hundreds and even thousands less than certain pricey pretenders. Our top pick is an electric smoothtop double-oven range that includes a convection mode for the oven priced at \$1,300. A pro-style range, on the other hand, can easily set you back \$5,000.

Gas and electric ranges can deliver good performance, and your kitchen is probably equipped for one fuel type or the other. Serious chefs often prefer gas models for the quick response and visual confirmation of a flame. But electric elements generally heat faster and maintain low heat more precisely. Dual-fuel ranges combine a gas cooktop with an electric oven, but with no clear advantages. You'll also find electric ranges with induction surface elements, which use an electromagnetic field to heat a pot or pan directly while leaving the surface of the cooktop cooler to the touch. They require magnetic cookware, which is widely available.

Most ordinary electric and gas ranges are 30 inches wide, and the trendy pro-style gas models might span 36 inches or more. Even traditional ranges now have beefy knobs, rugged grates, and stainless-steel trim for far less money. If you want good cooking and the look of stainless-steel trim, you'll find both for less than \$1,000.



Tip

Most smoothtops have expandable elements that let you switch between a large, high-power element and a small, low-power one contained within it. Some have an elongated bridge element to fit larger cookware.



AMANA

How to choose

Focus on convenience.

Look for at least one high-power burner or element for quick heating. Expandable electric elements let you match their size to a pot or pan. Ranges with at least five rack positions provide added flexibility when cooking on more than one rack, and models with double ovens can roast a turkey and bake a pie at the same time.

Match your cooking style.

Love sweets? Look for models with strong broiling scores. If a juicy steak is a frequent

menu item, choose a range that did well in our broiling tests. A roomy range helps if you entertain often; we measure space that you can actually use.

Don't buy based on Btu/hr.

Short for British thermal units per hour, this rating for gas surface burners is often a selling point at a store. But that measure merely indicates the amount of gas used and heat generated, not performance. Indeed, higher Btu didn't always guarantee faster heating in our tests.



JESSICA KLEWICKI GLENN



GE



Details that count



● DOUBLE OVENS

Two separate ovens let you roast a turkey in one oven while baking a pie at a different temperature in the other, for example.

● WARMING DRAWER

This convenient feature keeps plates and food warm and comes in handy when you're cooking for a crowd.

● DUAL-FUEL

These ranges feature a gas cooktop paired with an electric oven. Manufacturers tout more-even oven heating compared with gas ovens, especially for baking. But our tests have found no clear advantages.

● FIVE OR MORE OVEN-RACK POSITIONS

The more, the better. You can adjust for the size of the food and its distance to the broiler, and have more flexibility when using multiple racks.

● CONTROL LOCKOUT

It lets you disable the oven controls. We recommend it if the electronic-oven control panel is at the front of the range.

● VARIABLE BROILING

Most electric and gas ovens have this feature. It provides adjustable settings for food that needs slower or faster cooking.

● CONVECTION

Many higher-priced electric and gas ovens use a fan to circulate the hot air in an oven. Some have an additional convection heating element. Convection can reduce cooking time, especially for roasts.

● SELF-CLEANING CYCLE

Most use high heat to burn off spills and splatters in the oven. An automatic safety lock prevents the door from being opened until the oven has cooled. Certain models have a digital countdown display that shows the time left in the cycle.

● FLEXIBLE SURFACES

Continuous grates on gas ranges let you slide, instead of lift, heavy cookware between burners. Most smoothtops have expandable (dual or triple) elements that allow you to switch between a large, high-power element and a small, low-power element contained within it.

● ELECTRONIC TOUCH PADS

Be sure they're well-placed and visible while you cook. Front-mounted touchpads can be easy to bump and reset by accident.

● ELEMENTS OR BURNERS

Look for at least one high-heat element or burner (at least 2,100 watts or 12,500 Btu/hr.), especially if you often cook for a crowd. High heat sears and stir-fries well, and it can cook large quantities quickly. On gas ranges, sealed burners keep crumbs from dropping beneath the cooktop, and a simmer burner provides an extra-low setting for delicate sauces.

● RAISED EDGE AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE COOKTOP

It contains spills inside the cooktop area and makes cleanup much easier.

● HOT-SURFACE LIGHT

On an electric range, this light warns when an element is still hot. It's particularly useful on conventional smoothtops.

● INDUCTION SURFACE ELEMENTS

On an electric range, induction technology uses a powerful magnetic field to heat pots and pans fast, and the cooktop stays cooler.

Product guide

Stand-alone ranges are best when you're simply replacing an older model or when the range is the focal point, as with professional-style models.

ELECTRIC RANGES

Smoothtops, which place the cooktop elements beneath a ceramic-glass surface, have displaced coil cooktop ranges for all but the lowest-priced models. Most have four surface elements in three sizes. Some have a warming element in the center section. Induction cooktop elements use magnetic coils below the ceramic-glass surface to generate heat directly in a pot or pan rather than the cooking surface.

Pros Coil ranges are less expensive than conventional smoothtops, which are sleeker and easier to wipe clean. Induction technology takes the cake for quick cooktop heating.

Cons Coil models won't win any styling awards. Induction elements add to the price of a cooktop and require you to use magnetic cookware. Smoothtop element performance can be affected by pot flatness and construction, as well.



GAS RANGES

The power of a burner is measured in British thermal units per hour (Btu/hr.). Most gas ranges have four surface burners in three sizes: one or two medium-power burners (about 9,000 Btu/hr.), a small burner (about 5,000), and one or two large ones (about 12,500 or more). Some have a fifth burner instead of a center section. Gas-on-glass models with gas burners above a smooth ceramic surface are also an option.

Pros An experienced cook might find it easier to judge heat by the appearance of a gas flame, and gas burners can accommodate a variety of pot types and sizes. Smoothtop and coil elements tend to retain heat longer than gas burners when you move from a high setting to a low setting.

Cons In general, electric ranges offer faster high cooktop heating, though performance is model-specific.

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Electric ranges

You can find a high-performing electric range without spending a bundle. Several models we tested costing \$600 to \$1,000 out-performed ranges costing \$1,600 or more. Many moderately priced models also offer stainless steel, high-power elements, and other features. Spending more than \$1,000 generally buys an additional oven or a warming drawer. More money also gets you a more stylish design and possibly heavier construction. But that doesn't always translate to better cooking or performance.



A1 LG LDE3037ST

Type Smoothtop, double oven (30-inch)
Price \$1,300

This range was superb at simmering, delivering fast cooktop heat, baking, broiling, and self-cleaning. It offers four surface cooking elements, including two high-power, and a warming element. The oven has convection and steam-clean function for light cleaning.
lg.com



A3 SAMSUNG NE58F9710WS

Type Smoothtop, double oven (30-inch)
Price \$1,500

This slide-in model has one oven cavity and a single door, and comes with a divider that splits the oven in two, but the foods must cook within a certain temperature range. Cooktop heat was fast. Simmering, broiling, and self-cleaning were superb, and baking was impressive.
samsung.com



A4 MAYTAG MET8885XS

Type Smoothtop, double oven (30-inch)
Price \$1,700

This range features a smaller oven on top and a larger oven below, which has a convection feature. It was superb at baking but mediocre at broiling and self-cleaning. There are four surface elements, including two high-powered. For simmering sauces and melting chocolate, this model was excellent.
maytag.com



B1 LG LRE3083SW

Type Smoothtop, single oven (30-inch)
Price \$800

This top-rated model was superb at simmering and delivered fast heat. Baking and self-cleaning were impressive; broiling was superb. The large-capacity oven has convection option. Along with a warming element, there are four rangetop cooking elements, including two high-powered.
lg.com



B2 LG LRE3023S

Type Smoothtop, single oven (30-inch)
Price \$1,000

This model offers super simmering for heating sauces and melting chocolate, and has two high-power cooktop elements for searing and quickly bringing large pots of water to a boil. A warming element will keep a side dish warm while you finish the main dish. The spacious oven was impressive at baking and aced our broiling tests and has a convection mode.
lg.com



B3 GE CAFÉ CS980STSS

Type Smoothtop, single oven (30-inch)
Price \$2,800

High performance and bold style make this model stand out. It was excellent at simmering, baking, and broiling, and impressive at fast cooktop heating. It has five surface elements, including one high-powered, and a large oven equipped with convection. Touchpads set the oven temperature, and the cooking drawer below is handy when cooking for a crowd.
geappliances.com



Expert's PICK

“I’d choose an induction smoothtop range. Induction cooking surfaces perform really well in our tests and have other advantages, such as the surface not getting as hot when you use it and fast response when you adjust the heat. The Kenmore 95073, though still a bit of a splurge, is one of the least expensive ranges we’ve tested featuring an induction surface.”

—Tara Casaregola, Test Program Leader, Consumer Reports

D1 KENMORE 95073

Type Induction, single oven

Price \$1,530

kenmore.com



B6 GE PS920SFSS

Type Smoothtop, single oven (30-inch)

Price \$2,500

This slide-in model has four elements, including one high-power, and was superb at simmering and delivered fast heat. The large oven has a convection option and was impressive at baking and broiling, and excellent at self-cleaning. The warming drawer is handy when cooking for a crowd or waiting for stragglers.

geappliances.com



C1 KENMORE 94142

Type Coil, single oven (30-inch)

Price \$430

✓ **CR Best Buy**

This model is a basic range that delivered excellent performance. It has four surface elements; two are high-power. Simmering was superb. The large-capacity oven was impressive at baking but mediocre at broiling. This model excelled in our tough self-cleaning tests.

kenmore.com



D2 SAMSUNG NE58H997OWS

Type Induction, single oven (30-inch)

Price \$3,600

This slide-in model was excellent overall and offers fast cooktop heat, but not as fast as the other induction ranges tested. It has four surface elements (three are high power). Simmering was superb and so was broiling and self-cleaning. Baking was impressive. A slide-in partition converts the oven cavity into dual cavities with separate temperature controls (though they share the one oven door).

samsung.com

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Gas ranges

You can find a capable gas range without paying top dollar. Spending more than \$1,000 buys extra features such as an electric oven, an additional oven or warming drawer, a convection mode, and a fifth burner, plus more stylish design and heavier construction.



E1 KITCHENAID KDRS505XSS

Type Dual-fuel, double oven (30-inch)

Price \$2,000

The only 30-inch dual-fuel range to make our list of standouts, this model pairs a gas cooktop with an electric oven. It offers excellent simmering and lots of oven space, along with a convection mode. Baking was also impressive. Available in stainless steel. kitchenaid.com



E2 GE PGB950SEFSS

Type Gas, double oven (30-inch)

Price \$2,500

A smaller top oven is paired with a larger bottom oven offering a generous capacity. This model was impressive at simmering and baking, average at broiling, and self-cleaning was only fair. It has five burners, including one high power, a bridge burner that's handy when using the griddle, and a convection option in the lower oven. geappliances.com



F1 SAMSUNG NX58F5700WS

Type Gas, single oven (30-inch)

Price \$1,600

This range offers impressive simmering and baking, and very good broiling and self-cleaning. It has five surface burners, a bridge for griddle use, a warming drawer, and very good oven capacity, and five rack positions. Comes with a wok ring and griddle plate. samsung.com



F2 SAMSUNG NX58H9500WS

Type Gas, single oven (30-inch)

Price \$2,000

This slide-in model has five surface burners, including two high-power, convection, warming drawer, bridge burner for griddles, and a temperature probe. Superb simmering and a large oven offers impressive baking and broiling. Unlike many gas models, it was very good in our tough oven self-cleaning tests. samsung.com



G1 KITCHENAID KDRS407VSS

Type Pro-style, dual-fuel (30-inch)

Price \$4,000

This model (a 36-inch is also available) pairs a gas cooktop with an electric oven, delivering impressive performance overall. Superb simmering and fast cooktop heating helped put it on top; self-cleaning was very good. Time-savers include a convection mode and three high-power burners. But despite its hefty price, the oven is small and broiling was average. kitchenaid.com



KITCHENAID

Most & least reliable brands

More than 47,000 owners sound off

ELECTRIC RANGES	
Whirlpool	7%
GE	7%
Frigidaire	9%
Samsung	10%
Kenmore	11%
Maytag	11%
LG	12%
KitchenAid	15%
Electrolux	16%
Jenn-Air	17%

GAS AND DUAL-FUEL RANGES	
GAS	
Kenmore	9%
Frigidaire	9%
GE	9%
Whirlpool	11%
LG	11%
KitchenAid	15%
Maytag	15%
DUAL-FUEL	
GE	12%

Source: Consumer Reports Annual Product Reliability Survey. Our findings are based on 47,088 gas, electric and dual-fuel ranges that consumers bought new between 2010 and 2014. Each rate represents the percentage of electric, gas and dual-fuel ranges that were repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 4 points for electric (2 points for gas and dual-fuel) aren't meaningful. Models within a brand may vary, and design and manufacture changes may affect future reliability.

REPAIR OR REPLACE?

The survey examined products through the first eight years of ownership.

Gas

1-3 yr.	4-5 yr.	6+ yr.
REPAIR	CONSIDER REPAIR	REPLACE

Median repair cost **\$187**

TIP Dual-fuel models are pricey, so they're often worth fixing.

Electric

1-2 yr.	3-4 yr.	5+ yr.
REPAIR	CONSIDER REPAIR	REPLACE

Median repair cost **\$190**

TIP Parts for electric ranges tend to cost less than those for gas models.

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

A. ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS						FEATURES					
					Cooktop High	Cooktop Low	Baking	Broiling	Oven Capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power Elements/Burners	Medium-power Elements/Burners	Low-power Elements/Burners	Convection Mode	Slide-in	Stainless Steel Available
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	LG LDE3037ST	\$1,300	89	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	2	GE PS950SFSS	\$2,800	85	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Samsung NE58F9710WS	\$1,500	85	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Maytag MET8885XS	\$1,700	83	●	●	●	○	●	○	2	0	2	●		●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Frigidaire FGEF302TNF	\$1,400	82	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Frigidaire FGEF308TNF	\$1,800	81	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●		●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	LG LDE3015ST	\$1,300	81	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	8	KitchenAid Architect Series II KERS507XSS	\$1,600	77	●	●	●	○	●	○	2	0	2	●		●
	9	Kenmore 98053	\$1,600	76	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	10	Frigidaire FGEF301DNW	\$1,300	75	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2			●
	11	Kenmore 41112	\$2,600	74	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●	●	●
	12	Samsung FE710DRS	\$1,000	73	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	13	Whirlpool GGE388LXQ	\$1,100	71	●	●	○	●	●	○	2	0	2			●
	14	LG LDE3017ST	\$1,300	69	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	15	Frigidaire FGEF304DKW	\$1,500	67	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	16	Kenmore 97613	\$1,600	60	●	●	○	○	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	17	GE JB870TFWW	\$1,500	60	●	○	○	●	●	●	1	2	1	●		●
	18	Frigidaire FGEF306TM	\$1,300	57	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	19	LG LDE3035ST	\$1,400	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●

B. ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	LG LRE3083SW	\$800	86	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	LG LRE3023S	\$1,000	86	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	GE Café CS980STSS	\$2,800	86	●	●	●	●	●	○	1	2	2	●		●
	4	Electrolux EI30EF35JS	\$1,600	85	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	1	1	●		●
	5	Samsung NE58F9500SS	\$1,500	83	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	GE PS920SFSS	\$2,500	83	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●	●	●
	7	Samsung FE-R300SB	\$600	80	●	●	●	○	●	○	2	0	2			●
	8	Frigidaire FFEF3018LW	\$600	79	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2			●
	9	Bosch HEI8054U	\$1,800	79	●	●	●	●	○	○	2	0	2	●	●	●
	10	Kenmore 94242	\$900	78	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	11	LG LRE30453SB	\$730	78	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	12	Samsung NE594R0ABSR	\$600	77	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	13	Frigidaire Professional FPEF3081MF	\$900	76	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●		●
	14	Samsung NE597R0ABSR	\$1,200	75	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE reflects cooktop performance, oven capacity and cleaning, baking, and broiling. Displayed scores are rounded; models are listed in order of precise overall score. **COOKTOP HIGH** is how quickly the highest-powered element or burner heated water to a near-boil. **COOKTOP LOW** is how well the lowest-powered element or burner provided low heat as for melting chocolate without scorching, and how well the highest element or burner, set on low, held tomato sauce below a boil. **BAKING** reflects even browning of cakes and cookies on two oven racks. **BROILING** is even browning of a pan of burgers as well as searing ability. **OVEN CAPACITY** is our evaluation of usable space. **OVEN CLEANING** is the ability to remove our baked-on mix of eggs, cheese, pie filling, and other ingredients on the self-cleaning setting. **PRICE** is approximate retail.

B. ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH) continued

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS							FEATURES				
					Cooktop High	Cooktop Low	Baking	Broiling	Oven Capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power Elements/Burners	Medium-power Elements/Burners	Low-power Elements/Burners	Convection Mode	Slide-in	Stainless Steel Available
	15	GE JB750DFWW	\$1,000	75	●	●	●	○	●	●	1	2	1	●		●
	16	Frigidaire Gallery FGEF3032MF	\$675	74	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	17	Kenmore 42549	\$1,500	72	●	●	●	○	○	●	2	0	2	●	●	●
	18	KitchenAid Architect Series KERS807SSS	\$2,000	71	●	●	●	○	○	●	2	2	0	●		●
	19	Jenn-Air JER885RAS	\$1,600	70	●	●	○	○	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	20	GE JB650SFSS	\$800	70	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	21	Samsung FTQ353IWUX	\$800	70	●	○	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	22	Frigidaire FGEF3055MW	\$800	69	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	23	Whirlpool Gold GY399LXUQ	\$1,500	68	●	●	○	●	○	●	2	0	2	●	●	
	24	Samsung FTQ387LWGX	\$1,000	67	●	○	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	25	Frigidaire Gallery FGES3065PW	\$1,600	66	●	●	○	●	○	○	2	0	2	●	●	●
	26	Whirlpool WFE720H0AS	\$1,100	66	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	27	Frigidaire FFES3025PW	\$1,200	66	●	●	●	●	○	●	2	0	2		●	●
	28	GE Profile PB930SHSS	\$1,500	65	●	○	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●		●
	29	KitchenAid KERS206XWH	\$850	65	●	○	○	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	30	Whirlpool WFE510S0AW	\$600	64	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	31	Amana AER5830VAB	\$550	56	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	32	Kenmore 91312	\$500	56	●	○	○	●	○	NA	1	1	2			●
	33	Maytag MER8880AS	\$1,100	54	●	○	●	○	●	●	1	2	1	●		●
	34	Amana AER5823XAW	\$450	52	○	●	●	●	●	NA	0	2	2			●
	35	Frigidaire FFEF3013LS	\$500	48	●	●	●	○	○	NA	2	0	2			●

C. ELECTRIC COIL TOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)

✓	1	Kenmore 94142	\$430	81	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2			●
	2	Frigidaire FFEF3015LW	\$450	78	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2			●
	3	Hotpoint RB757DPWH	\$400	76	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			
	4	Whirlpool RY160LXTQ	\$800	75	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2		●	●
	5	Whirlpool RF263LXTQ	\$400	65	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	6	Whirlpool WFC310S0AW	\$500	63	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	7	GE JB350RFSS	\$700	62	●	○	○	●	●	●	2	0	2			●
	8	Whirlpool WFC340S0AW	\$700	44	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2			●

D. ELECTRIC INDUCTION SMOOTHTOP (30-INCH)

✓	1	Kenmore 95073	\$1,530	89	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	1	1	●		●
✓	2	Samsung NE58H9970WS	\$3,600	86	●	●	●	●	●	●	3	1	0	●	●	●
✓	3	GE PHB920SFSS	\$2,200	86	●	●	●	○	●	●	3	1	0	●		●
✓	4	Bosch HIIP054U	\$3,200	81	●	●	●	●	○	○	2	2	0	●	●	●
✓	5	Frigidaire Gallery FGIF3061NF	\$1,800	81	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	1	1	●		●
	6	Electrolux EI30IF40LS	\$1,700	79	●	●	●	●	●	●	3	0	1	●		●
	7	Samsung NE595N0PBSR	\$1,700	77	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	0	2	●		●
	8	Electrolux EW30IS65JS	\$3,200	73	●	●	○	●	○	●	3	1	0	●	●	●
	9	Maytag MIR8890AS	\$1,800	67	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	0	2	●		●

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

E. GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS						FEATURES				
					Cooktop High	Cooktop Low	Baking	Broiling	Oven Capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power Elements/Burners	Medium-power Elements/Burners	Low-power Elements/Burners	Convection Mode	Slide-in Stainless Steel Available
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	KitchenAid KDRS505XSS Dual-fuel	\$2,000	71	○	●	●	●	●	○	1	2	2	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	GE PGB950SEFSS	\$2,500	70	●	●	●	○	●	●	1	3	1	●	●
	3	Kenmore 78013	\$1,650	58	●	○	●	●	●	●	2	1	1		●
	4	LG LDG3035ST	\$1,600	57	○	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1		●
	5	LG LDG3015ST	\$1,500	57	○	●	○	○	●	●	2	2	1		●
	6	GE Café CGS990SETSS	\$2,900	57	●	●	○	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	7	Kenmore 78902	\$1,900	52	●	○	●	●	●	○	2	2	1	●	●
	8	Frigidaire FGGF304DLF	\$1,600	51	●	○	○	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●

F. GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Samsung NX58F5700WS	\$1,600	79	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Samsung NX58H9500WS	\$2,000	77	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	GE PGS920SEFSS	\$2,800	73	●	●	●	○	●	○	1	3	1	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Frigidaire Gallery FGGF3032MW	\$700	71	○	●	●	○	●	○	2	2	1	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Kenmore 74132	\$700	71	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	2	1		●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Samsung NX58F5500SS	\$900	71	○	●	●	○	●	○	2	2	1		●
	7	GE PGB945SEFSS	\$2,300	68	●	●	●	○	●	●	1	2	1	●	●
	8	Kenmore 74332	\$800	68	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	9	Kenmore 75232	\$1,200	68	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	10	GE JGB750SEFSS	\$900	66	●	●	●	○	●	●	1	2	1	●	●
	11	Whirlpool Gold GW399LXUQ	\$1,700	66	○	●	●	○	○	○	2	1	1	●	●
	12	Electrolux EI30GF35JS	\$1,500	65	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	13	Samsung FX710BGS	\$1,500	65	●	○	●	○	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	14	Bosch HDI8054U Dual-fuel	\$2,300	63	○	●	●	●	○	○	2	1	2	●	●
	15	LG LRG3085ST	\$1,200	63	○	○	●	○	●	○	2	2	1	●	●
	16	Samsung NX583G0VBRS	\$900	62	●	○	●	●	●	○	2	2	1		●
	17	GE Café CGS985SETSS	\$3,000	61	●	●	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	18	Bosch HDIP054U Dual-fuel	\$2,800	57	○	○	●	●	○	○	2	1	2	●	●
	19	GE P2B940SEHSS Dual-fuel	\$2,000	56	●	○	●	○	●	●	1	3	1	●	●
	20	Whirlpool WFG510S0AS	\$500	56	○	○	●	●	●	●	1	2	1		●
	21	Whirlpool WFG520S0AS	\$600	54	○	○	●	●	●	●	2	1	1		●
	22	Frigidaire FFGF3023LS	\$700	53	○	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1		●
	23	GE Café C2S985SETSS Dual-fuel	\$3,000	51	●	●	●	○	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	24	Whirlpool WFG540H0AH	\$900	51	○	○	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	25	Maytag MGR8880AS	\$1,100	50	○	○	●	●	●	●	2	2	1	●	●
	26	Frigidaire FFGF3017LW	\$550	46	○	●	○	●	○	NA	1	2	1		
	27	Frigidaire FFGS3025PW	\$1,300	44	○	○	●	●	○	○	1	2	1		●
	28	Frigidaire Gallery FGGS3065PW	\$1,500	43	●	○	○	●	○	●	2	1	1	●	●
	29	KitchenAid Architect Series KGRS807SSS	\$1,700	31	○	●	●	●	○	○	2	0	2	●	●

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor



G. PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (30-INCH)

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS						FEATURES				
					Cooktop High	Cooktop Low	Baking	Broiling	Oven Capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power Elements/Burners	Medium-power Elements/Burners	Low-power Elements/Burners	Convection Mode	Slide-in Stainless Steel Available
✓	1	KitchenAid KDRS407VSS Dual-fuel	\$4,000	72	●	●	●	○	○	●	3	0	1	●	●
	2	Wolf DF304 Dual-fuel	\$6,400	68	○	●	●	●	○	●	3	1	0	●	●
	3	Dacor DR30G	\$3,100	66	○	●	○	○	●	NA	3	1	0	●	●
	4	GE Monogram ZGP304NRSS	\$5,000	65	○	●	●	○	●	○	1	3	0	●	●
	5	Kenmore Pro 79523 Dual-fuel	\$3,800	65	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	2	1	●	●
	6	Jenn-Air JGRP430WP	\$4,000	62	○	●	●	●	○	●	3	0	1	●	●
	7	DCS RGU-305	\$3,700	62	○	●	○	●	○	NA	5	0	0	●	●
	8	NXR DRGB3001	\$2,000	60	○	●	○	○	○	NA	4	0	0	●	●
	9	DCS RGTC305SS	\$4,700	58	●	●	●	●	●	●	5	0	0	●	●
	10	Dacor Epicure ER30GSCH	\$3,600	58	○	●	○	○	○	NA	3	1	0	●	●
	11	Viking VDSC530SS Dual-fuel	\$5,500	52	○	●	○	●	●	○	4	0	0	●	●
	12	Thermador PRG304GH	\$4,500	52	●	●	●	●	○	NA	4	0	0	●	●
	13	Dacor Epicure ER30D Dual-fuel	\$5,300	51	○	●	○	○	○	●	3	1	0	●	●
	14	Viking VGSC5304BSS	\$5,000	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	4	0	0	●	●
	15	Wolf GR304	\$4,900	45	○	●	○	●	○	NA	3	1	0	●	●
	16	Bertazzoni PRO304GASX	\$3,100	43	○	●	○	○	○	NA	1	1	2	●	●
	17	American Range ARR304	\$3,600	32	●	●	○	●	●	NA	3	1	0	●	●
	18	Blue Star RNB304BV1SS	\$3,700	31	●	●	●	●	●	NA	3	1	0	●	●

H. PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (36-INCH)

✓	1	KitchenAid KDRU763VSS Dual-fuel	\$6,000	74	●	●	●	●	●	●	3	0	1	●	●
✓	2	GE Monogram ZDP364NDPSS Dual-fuel	\$7,500	72	○	●	●	○	●	●	4	0	0	●	●
	3	Thermador PRG366JG	\$7,500	68	●	●	●	○	●	●	6	0	0	●	●
	4	Viking VGSC536-4G	\$7,200	68	●	●	●	●	○	●	4	0	0	●	●
	5	Wolf GR366	\$6,000	59	○	●	○	●	●	NA	5	1	0	●	●
	6	NXR DRGB3602	\$3,000	56	○	●	○	○	○	NA	6	0	0	●	●
	7	Kenmore Pro 79623 Dual-fuel	\$5,500	52	●	○	○	○	●	●	2	4	0	●	●
	8	Jenn-Air JGRP436WP	\$5,200	43	○	●	●	●	●	●	5	0	1	●	●
	9	Verona VEFSGE365SS Dual-fuel	\$2,500	25	●	●	●	●	○	NA	3	0	2	●	●

Cooktops

Flexibility is the biggest reason to swap your range for a cooktop and wall oven combination.

REARRANGING THE LAYOUT of your kitchen? Now is the time to consider the benefits of a cooktop and wall oven combination. The look is modern and you have some flexibility where you install the appliances. Place the wall oven at a height that works for you, making it easier to reach in and eliminating bending.

Most cooktops are gas or conventional smoothtop electric. But induc-

tion technology is growing in popularity as prices fall. The downside of a cooktop and wall oven combo is price. Although you can pay as little as \$1,500 or so, you can often find a great range for roughly half that price. And we've found that with cooktops, pricier doesn't always mean better. See our Ratings to find a cooktop model that matches the best performance with the best price.



OPEN COOKING SURFACE

Thermador's Freedom CIT36XKB induction cooktop has no set elements, just a smooth surface and color touch screen so that you can cook anywhere on its surface. At 36 inches and \$5,000, it's the widest and most expensive induction cooktop we've tested.

How did it stack up? The cooktop was excellent overall, offering fast heating and superb simmering performance. We recommend it.



A cooktop with chunky stainless-steel styling offers a commercial look—and costs less than a pro-style range.



MIELE

Details that count



ELECTRIC COOKTOPS



VIKING



LG

EXPANDABLE ELEMENTS

Most electric smoothtops have expandable dual or triple elements that let you switch from a large, high-power element to a smaller, lower-power element contained within it. Some have a low-wattage element for keeping food warm. And some have an elongated “bridge” element that spans two burners to accommodate a griddle or odd-shaped cookware.

HOT-SURFACE WARNING INDICATOR LIGHTS

Many smoothtops have at least one. Ideally, each element should have a separate warning light. It’s an important safety feature; the cooking surface can remain hot long after an element has been turned off.

SMOOTHTOPS VS. COILS

All but the least expensive electric cooktop models are smoothtops, which look sleeker than units with coils. They’re easier to clean overall and they offer more features. But individual coils are easy to replace if they break. Most models are 30 inches wide, though 36-inch smoothtop models are available.

CONTROLS

On many electric cooktops, the controls take up space on the surface. Models with touch-sensitive controls provide a flat, easy-to-clean surface, but they can be finicky.



INDUCTION COOKTOPS

A growing number of electric cooktops use an electromagnetic field that mostly heats the pot or pan. Called induction cooking, the process speeds heating, wastes less energy than some other types, and cleaning up spills quickly is easier as the surface stays cooler during cooking and after. Though induction cooktops are still relatively expensive overall, falling prices now put them roughly on a par with certain upscale gas and conventional smoothtop electric models. Induction cooktops are usually 30 inches wide.



GAS COOKTOPS

Many gas cooktops are 36 inches wide and have five burners: a small unit (about 5,000 Btu/hr.); one or two medium-power units (about 9,000 Btu/hr.); and one or two large ones (12,000 Btu/hr. or more). Whichever type you buy, look for at least one high-power burner. Sealed burners catch crumbs and spills. Gas-on-glass burners are set into a smooth ceramic surface for a sleek profile much like a smoothtop electric's, though they still protrude slightly above the surface.

MAKE IT LAST

Keep your cooktop simmering:

1. Place heavy pots and pans gently on smoothtop models to avoid breakage.
2. Prevent scratches by cleaning with a nonabrasive cleanser made for cooktops.
3. On a coil model, never cover drip pans and bowls with aluminum foil, which can short-circuit the burner.
4. Keep reflector bowls (beneath the burners) shiny and clean, to ensure they reflect heat up to the pan or pot efficiently. Replace if they can no longer be cleaned.
5. Periodically clean burner ports with a needle or a small piece of wire.
6. Don't poke the igniter or spray it with oven cleaner.



WOLF

How to choose

1 Choose your fuel—if you can.

Electric cooktop elements tend to heat faster than gas burners, but they lack the visual confirmation of a flame when adjusted from a high to a low setting. Induction electric cooktops offer even faster heating and quick response, but they cost more and require magnetic

cookware. All three types are capable of delivering top cooking performance.

2 Weigh convenience as well as maintenance and durability.

Electric smoothtop cooktops are relatively easy to clean but require a special cooktop cleaner (available at most grocery stores) and can be

damaged by dropped pots and spilled foods. Coil-top models tend to be less easily damaged but are also less stylish and more difficult to keep clean.

3 Don't pay for features that don't deliver value.

Touch-sensitive controls on smoothtops are sleek, but some are more finicky and less

intuitive than conventional knobs. Manufacturers tout burners' high Btu/hr., but we've found that they don't always deliver faster heating.

4 Buy by cooking style.

If you often cook for a crowd, look for at least one high-power cooktop element or burner to heat large pots and pans more quickly.

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Electric cooktops



A1 KITCHENAID KECC604BBL

Type 30-inch smoothtop

Price \$900

Fast heating and precise simmering put this model ahead of the pack. It has four elements; two are high-power, and one is expandable to accommodate larger pots and pans. High- and low-heat performance were excellent.

kitchenaid.com



A3 MAYTAG MEC7430WS

Type 30-inch smoothtop

Price \$800

This cooktop is one of the few we tested that is superb at high- and low-heat cooking. It has four elements, including two high-power. On low heat, chocolate melted without scorching and tomato sauce held just below a boil.

maytag.com



A4 KENMORE 44273

Type 30-inch smoothtop

Price \$1,150

Fast heating and precise simmering put this model ahead of most of the others in this group. Other perks for the price include two high-power elements, a sleek touch-control keypad, expandable elements, and stainless-steel trim.

kenmore.com



A5 KENMORE 42733

✓ **CR Best Buy**

Type 30-inch smoothtop

Price \$640

This cooktop does almost as well as its brandmate for about half the price. You get similar fast heating and superb simmering, plus two high-power elements, including one that is expandable.

kenmore.com



A6 FRIGIDAIRE PROFESSIONAL FPEC3085KS

Type 30-inch smoothtop

Price \$950

This model offers precise simmering and heating. It has four elements (one is high-power), expandable elements, and a stainless-steel trim.

frigidaire.com



A7 GE CAFÉ CP350STSS

Type 30-inch smoothtop

Price \$1,200

Superb simmering and brisk heating make this cooktop a standout. It has five elements (one is high-power), expandable elements, and a stainless-steel trim.

geappliances.com

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Electric induction cooktops



C1 KENMORE 43820

Type 30-inch induction

Price \$1,700

This model offers superb simmering and heating speed is brisk. It has one high-power element and a bridge element. Touch controls and a stainless-steel trim add to its sleek look.

kenmore.com



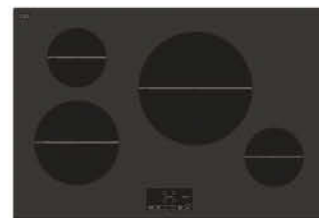
C2 GE PROFILE PHP900DMBB

Type 30-inch induction

Price \$1,400

In addition to fast heating, this cooktop offers excellent simmering. It has touch controls and four elements, two of which are high-power.

geappliances.com



C3 BOSCH NIT5066UC

Type 30-inch induction

Price \$1,800

This cooktop has four elements (two are high-power) and offers superb high- and low-heat performance. Elements can be set to turn off with a countdown timer.

boschappliances.com

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Gas cooktops

Expert's
PICK



“I’d pick the 36-inch Thermador SGSX365FS gas cooktop, \$1,900. Its fast heating and excellent simmering make it a good fit for a range of cooking styles. And I like the look of the star-shaped burners.”

—Michael DiLauro, Product Information Specialist, Consumer Reports

F1 THERMADOR SGSX365FS

Price \$1,900

thermador.com



E1 BOSCH NGM8054UC

Type 30-inch gas

Price \$1,100

This model offers excellent simmering, but its high-power burner wasn’t among the fastest in our tests. It has five burners with auto-reignite, continuous grates, and a stainless surface for a pro-style look. boschappliances.com



E2 KENMORE 32353

Type 30-inch gas

Price \$1,200

This model aced our simmering tests, though its highest-power burner wasn’t among the fastest. It has a pro-style look with five burners and continuous grates. kenmore.com



E3 LG LSCG306ST

Type 30-inch gas

Price \$1,100

Fast heating and impressive simmering make this cooktop a top pick. It has five burners (one of which is high-power), a stainless-steel surface, continuous grates, and center-mounted knobs. lg.com



F2 GE MONOGRAM ZGU385NSMSS

Type 36-inch gas

Price \$1,400

This model delivers superb simmering, but heating wasn’t as fast as with the top-Rated Thermador. It has a stainless-steel surface, five burners (three are high-power), continuous grates, and center-mounted knobs. geappliances.com



F3 GE PROFILE JGP975WEKWW

Type 36-inch gas

Price \$1,200

This cooktop offers superb simmering, but heating wasn’t as fast as the top model. It has five burners (including one high-power), continuous grates, and center-mounted knobs. geappliances.com



F4 VIKING VGC5366BSS

Type 36-inch gas

Price \$2,200

This pro-look model offers excellent simmering, but heating wasn’t as fast as the top model. It has six burners (three are high-power), continuous grates, and an auto-reignite feature. vikingrange.com

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

A. 30-INCH ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOPS

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS		FEATURES				
					High Heat	Low Heat	High-power Elements	Medium-power Elements	Low-power Elements	Expandable Elements	Touch Controls
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	KitchenAid KECC604BBL	\$900	94	●	●	2	0	2	•	
	2	Jenn-Air JEC4430BS	\$1,400	94	●	●	2	0	2	•	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Maytag MEC7430WS	\$700	94	●	●	2	0	2		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Kenmore 44273	\$1,150	93	●	●	2	1	1	•	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Kenmore 42733	\$640	91	●	●	2	0	2	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Frigidaire Professional FPEC3085KS	\$950	90	○	●	1	3	0	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	GE Café CP350STSS	\$1,200	90	○	●	1	1	3	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	Electrolux Icon E30EC65ESS	\$1,200	88	○	●	1	2	2	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	LG LCE3081ST	\$1,000	87	○	●	1	1	2	•	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	Whirlpool G7CE3034XP	\$700	86	○	●	2	0	2	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	GE Profile PP945BMBB	\$950	86	○	●	2	0	2	•	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12	Frigidaire FFEC3024LB	\$500	85	○	●	2	0	2		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13	Bosch NET5054UC	\$900	85	○	●	1	2	1	•	•
	14	Jenn-Air JED4430WS	\$1,800	84	○	●	2	1	1	•	•
	15	Jenn-Air JEC9530BDS	\$900	83	○	●	1	1	2	•	
	16	KitchenAid KECC506RSS	\$900	77	○	○	1	1	2	•	
	17	Miele KM5656	\$1,600	77	○	●	2	1	1	•	•
	18	Thermador CES304FS	\$1,500	75	○	●	1	2	1	•	•
	19	GE PP912	\$800	75	○	○	2	0	2	•	

B. 36-INCH ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOPS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Maytag MEC7536W	\$830	94	●	●	2	0	3		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Maytag MEC7636W	\$1,100	94	●	●	2	0	3	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Frigidaire Professional FPEC3685KS	\$1,000	90	○	●	1	3	1	•	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Viking VEC5366BSB	\$2,200	88	○	●	1	3	2	•	

C. 30-INCH ELECTRIC INDUCTION COOKTOPS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Kenmore 43820	\$1,700	99	●	●	3	1	0		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	GE Profile PHP900DMBB	\$1,400	99	●	●	2	2	0		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Bosch NIT5066UC	\$1,800	98	●	●	2	2	0		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Kenmore 43800	\$1,400	97	●	●	3	1	0		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Bosch NIT5065UC	\$1,800	97	●	●	2	0	2		•
	6	Jenn-Air JEI0430ADS	\$2,300	96	●	●	1	2	1		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	KitchenAid KICU500XB	\$1,400	95	●	●	2	2	0		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	Whirlpool GC13061XB	\$1,200	95	●	●	2	0	2		•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	LG LCE30845	\$1,800	93	●	●	1	2	1		•

D. 36-INCH ELECTRIC INDUCTION COOKTOPS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Thermador CIT36XKB	\$5,000	92	●	●	2	1	1	•	•
	2	Jenn-Air JIC4536XS	\$2,100	90	○	●	5	0	0	•	•

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ○ Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE reflects cooktop performance at high and low heat. The displayed score is out of a total of 100 points. **HIGH HEAT** reflects how quickly the highest-power element heated a large pot of water to near-boiling. **LOW HEAT** reflects how well the lowest-power element melted and held chocolate without scorching, and how the most powerful element, set to low, held tomato sauce below a boil. **PRICE** is approximate retail.

E. 30-INCH GAS COOKTOPS

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS		FEATURES						
					High Heat	Low Heat	High-power Burners	Medium-power Burners	Low-power Burners	Stainless Steel	Glass Ceramic	Porcelain Enamel	Continuous Grates
✓	1	Bosch NGM8054UC	\$1,100	79	○	●	1	2	2	●			●
✓	2	Kenmore 32353	\$1,200	76	○	●	2	2	1	●			●
✓	3	LG LSCG306ST	\$1,100	73	●	●	1	3	1	●			●
	4	GE PGP953SETSS	\$1,100	64	○	●	1	3	1	●			●
	5	Viking RDGSU2005B	\$1,200	60	○	●	2	2	1	●			●
	6	Frigidaire FPGC3087MS	\$1,000	51	○	○	2	2	1	●			●
	7	KitchenAid KFGS306VSS	\$1,100	37	●	●	1	3	1	●			●

F. 36-INCH GAS COOKTOPS

✓	1	Thermador SGSX365FS	\$1,900	81	●	●	3	2	0	●			●
✓	2	GE Monogram ZGU385NSMSS	\$1,400	80	○	●	3	2	0	●			●
✓	3	GE Profile JGP975WEKWW	\$1,200	80	○	●	1	2	2			●	●
✓	4	Viking VGC5366BSS	\$2,200	77	○	●	3	2	1	●			●
✓	5	GE Café CGP650SETSS	\$1,400	77	○	●	1	3	1	●			●
✓	6	Electrolux EW36GC55GS	\$1,300	74	○	●	2	2	1	●			●
✓	7	LG LSCG366ST	\$1,300	74	●	●	2	2	1	●			●
✓	8	Bosch NGM8654UC	\$1,200	70	○	●	4	0	1	●			●
✓	9	Kenmore 32313	\$1,100	69	●	●	2	2	1	●			●
	10	Whirlpool G7CG3665X	\$1,000	68	○	●	2	1	2			●	●
	11	Jenn-Air JGC9536BD	\$1,100	67	●	○	2	1	2		●		●
	12	Wolf CG365P/S	\$2,000	64	●	○	2	3	0	●			●
	13	Miele KM3474GSS	\$1,750	62	●	○	3	2	0	●			●
	14	Maytag MGC7536WS	\$800	55	○	○	2	2	1	●			●
	15	Whirlpool Gold GLS3665RS	\$1,100	54	●	●	3	2	0	●			●
	16	Kenmore 32249	\$600	52	○	○	1	3	1			●	●
	17	Frigidaire Gallery FGGC3645KS	\$900	48	●	●	2	2	1	●			●
	18	Jenn-Air JGD3536WS	\$1,900	47	○	●	3	1	1	●			●
	19	KitchenAid KGCK366VSS	\$1,000	45	○	●	2	1	2	●			●
	20	Jenn-Air JGD3536BS	\$2,000	38	●	●	3	1	1	●			●

Most & least reliable brands

More than 6,000 owners sound off

GAS COOKTOPS

Bosch	3%
Kenmore	5%
GE	7%
KitchenAid	11%

ELECTRIC COOKTOPS

Whirlpool	5%
Kenmore	6%
GE	6%
Frigidaire	6%
KitchenAid	8%
Jenn-Air	10%

Source: Our findings are based on 6,294 electric or gas cooktops that consumers bought new between 2011 and 2014. Each rate represents the percentage of electric or gas cooktops that were repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 4 points aren't meaningful. Models within a brand may vary, and design and manufacture changes may affect future reliability.

Wall ovens

Design flexibility and less bending are two advantages of including a wall oven (or two) in your plan.



LOWER PRICES HAVE made wall oven and cooktop combinations more affordable. In fact, some combos cost less than some stand-alone ranges—especially pro-style models—though installation does add to the cost.

Unlike a range, a wall oven allows you to put the oven exactly where you want it: at waist or eye level so that you won't have to bend to pull out heavy pans, or even under the counter or in an island or peninsula. Some manufacturers offer double ovens; other options include a self-cleaning mode, a convection function,

and 24-, 27-, or 30-inch widths. Gas models are available, but most wall ovens, including the models we've included in our Ratings, are electric.

Once again, we found that a high price doesn't necessarily guarantee top performance. Some of the more expensive models we tested scored only good in our baking or broiling tests. So shop carefully, using our Ratings and reliability data as a guide. And remember that you don't necessarily have to choose the same brand for your wall oven and cooktop.



How to choose

Consider the fuel you'll use.

The majority of wall ovens are electric; they usually have a larger capacity than similar gas models and don't require a gas connection. But remember that electric wall ovens need their own electrical circuit. No matter how it's fueled, be sure to have your new wall oven professionally installed.

Suit your own style.

A convection feature uses a fan and sometimes extra heating elements to circulate heated air throughout the oven. That can speed cooking, but you'll usually pay about \$250 more for

the convenience. Models that excelled at broiling produced well-seared, evenly cooked burgers in our tests. If you're an avid baker, look for high scores in our baking tests, which focus on even browning in multitrack baking.

Take manufacturer capacity claims with a grain of salt.

An oven's usable capacity might be far less than what a manufacturer claims. That's because manufacturers often measure unusable nooks and crannies, and leave broiler elements out of their calculations. We consider racks and spacing.

Details that count

● ELECTRONIC TOUCHPAD CONTROLS

Setting and monitoring precise temperatures are easier with a digital display. Touch-sensitive controls are available on some models. Whichever controls you choose, you'll often find a control lockout that lets you disable them, an important feature in households where the control panel is within a curious child's reach.

● OVEN WINDOW

A window without a decorative grid gives a clearer view of what's inside, so you can judge progress without opening the door.

● COVERED ELEMENT

A cover over the bottom baking element catches drips and spills. You won't have to reach around the element to wipe out the bottom of the oven, making cleanup faster and easier.

● SELF-CLEANING CYCLE

A special cycle removes spills and spatters in electric and gas wall ovens. An automatic safety lock on high-temperature self-cleaning models prevents the oven door from being opened until the oven has cooled. Some models have a countdown display that shows the time left in the self-cleaning cycle.

● TEMPERATURE PROBE

This electronic thermometer is inserted into your food; it displays the internal temperature on the oven's control panel to show when the food is done.

● VARIABLE BROIL

Most electric ovens have this feature, which offers adjustable settings for foods that need slower or faster cooking.



RECOMMENDED MODELS

Wall ovens

“I bought the Whirlpool WOS92ECOAH single wall oven, \$1,500, for my own kitchen remodel. I like the true convection feature, because it allows for three-rack baking and speeds up roasting time.”

—Michael DiLauro, Product Information Specialist,
Consumer Reports

B1 WHIRLPOOL WOS92ECOAH

✓ **CR Best Buy**

Price \$1,500

whirlpool.com

**Expert's
PICK**



B2 MAYTAG MEW9530AW

✓ **CR Best Buy**

Price \$1,400

This 30-inch wall oven offers impressive baking, turning out evenly browned cakes and cookies, and is superb at broiling. It even aced our tough self-cleaning tests. The large oven is equipped with a convection feature.
maytag.com



B3 KITCHENAID KEBS109BWW

Price \$2,000

This model has a large oven that's equipped with convection, a potential time-saver for roasting. It offers impressive baking and self-cleaning, and superb broiling.
kitchenaid.com



B4 GE PT9050FSSS

Price \$2,600

This model delivers impressive baking, broiling, and self-cleaning, but other top picks were better and cost a lot less. The GE is the only one that lets you control oven functions from your smart phone.
geappliances.com

Most & least reliable brands

More than 9,600
owners sound off

Source: Consumer Reports Annual Product Reliability Survey. Our findings are based on 9,600 consumers who bought an electric wall oven between 2010 and 2014. Each rate represents the percentage of electric wall ovens that were repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 3 points aren't meaningful. Models within a brand may vary, and design and manufacture changes may affect future reliability.

ELECTRIC WALL OVENS

GE	8%
Bosch	10%
Kenmore	10%
Whirlpool	11%
Frigidaire	11%
KitchenAid	12%

REPAIR OR REPLACE?

The survey examined products through the first eight years of ownership.

Electric

1-3 yr.

REPAIR

4-6 yr.

CONSIDER
REPAIR

7+ yr.

REPLACE

Median repair cost **\$248**



B5 WHIRLPOOL WOS51ECOAS

✓ **CR Best Buy**

Price \$1,300

Though it lacks convection, this model was almost as capable as its more expensive brandmate. It evenly browned cakes and cookies, was excellent at turning out nicely browned broiled burgers, and aced our tough self-cleaning tests.

whirlpool.com



B6 MAYTAG MEW7530AW

✓ **CR Best Buy**

Price \$1,000

This model was the least expensive of the more than two dozen tested, yet outperformed models that cost two to three times as much. The oven is large and very good at baking and excellent at broiling. The self-cleaning feature aced our tough tests.

maytag.com



B7 BOSCH HBL5450UC

Price \$1,900

This oven offers impressive baking, broiling, and self-cleaning. It includes a convection feature, temperature probe, a combination of glass-touch and dial controls, and a large oven window.

bosch-home.com

Select Ratings

Recommended models only from 32 tested.

A. DOUBLE ELECTRIC WALL OVENS

Rec.	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS				FEATURES			
					Baking	Broiling	Oven Capacity	Self-cleaning	Width (in.)	Covered Element	Convection Mode	Temperature Probe
✓	1	Whirlpool WOD93EC0AS	\$2,500	80	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	
✓	2	Maytag MEW9630A	\$2,700	80	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	
✓	3	KitchenAid KEBS209BSP	\$3,500	79	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●
✓	4	GE PT9550SFSS	\$3,600	73	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●
✓	5	Whirlpool WOD51EC0A	\$2,000	72	●	●	●	●	30	●		
✓	6	Maytag MEW7630A	\$1,700	72	●	●	●	●	30	●		
✓	7	Bosch HBL5650UC	\$2,805	72	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●
✓	8	Bosch HBL8650UC	\$3,115	72	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●

B. SINGLE ELECTRIC WALL OVENS

✓	1	Whirlpool WOS92EC0AH	\$1,500	80	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	
✓	2	Maytag MEW9530AW	\$1,400	80	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	
✓	3	KitchenAid KEBS109BWW	\$2,000	79	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●
✓	4	GE PT9050SFSS	\$2,600	73	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●
✓	5	Whirlpool WOS51EC0AS	\$1,300	72	●	●	●	●	30	●		
✓	6	Maytag MEW7530AW	\$1,000	72	●	●	●	●	30	●		
✓	7	Bosch HBL5450UC	\$1,900	72	●	●	●	●	30	●	●	●

✓ CR Best Buy ✓ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE reflects oven capacity and baking, broiling, and self-cleaning ability. The displayed score is out of a total of 100 points. **BAKING** reflects whether cakes and cookies baked on two racks were evenly browned. **BROILING** is based on even browning of a pan of burgers and high-heat searing ability. (The performance of double wall-oven models is based on the tested oven in the single electric wall-oven category.) **PRICE** is approximate retail.

Range hoods

The best kitchen ventilation choices clear smoke and fumes with style.



Avoid overwhelming a compact space by choosing an island hood with sleek, simple lines.

ZEPHYR

CONVECTION AND OTHER added features help make over-the-range microwave ovens an enticing choice over space-stealing countertop models. But if you care about venting smoke and fumes, you're better off with a range hood in place of an over-the-range microwave, especially if you cook on a higher-powered stove.

None of the over-the-range microwave ovens we tested in the past could match the smoke-capturing or fume-clearing abilities of a good

range hood. Note that we no longer test and rate range hoods, but this buying guide can help you when shopping.

A fashion statement. Range hoods have become as stylish as they are practical. They're available in a range of profiles, from sleek contemporary to beefy pro-style. Most now offer the commercial look of stainless steel, or choose from the light effect of glass, or, for a more personalized look, pick a style

designed to be fitted with a custom wood or metal facing.

Range hoods vs. OTR microwaves.

The best hoods we tested in the past excelled at containing and exhausting smoke and fumes. Some were also notably quieter than the others and better at delivering high and low levels of lighting. Our recent tests of microwaves focused on cooking evenness, automatic defrosting ability, speed of heating, noise, ease of use, and venting.



WHIRLPOOL

Details that count

AIRFLOW

Manufacturers tout the cubic feet per minute (cfm) of exhausted air. More airflow means faster ventilation, but it doesn't guarantee better smoke capture and removal in your kitchen. Many hoods that we tested that claimed to have modest airflow vented as well as those with twice the airflow.

NUMBER OF FAN SPEEDS

Most of the hoods we tested offered from three to six fan speeds. We recommend a minimum of two speeds: a high-speed setting to use when cooking and a very low and very quiet setting to use after cooking to continue to ventilate the space while eating. Any more than three set speeds are too many. If the manufacturer wants to provide more than three speeds, it should just use a variable speed switch that the user can easily set to any speed desired.

THERMOSTAT CONTROL

A built-in temperature sensor in some models automatically turns on the fan if the temperature below the hood gets too high. This feature is available mainly on over-the-range microwaves. The real purpose of the thermostat is to protect the microwave electronics

from being damaged by high temperatures. If the temperature under the microwave is too high, the exhaust fan comes on to draw away the hot air and pull in cooler air from the rest of the kitchen. But we do not recommend this feature on range-hoods because if you are cooking with oil and your pan catches fire, the exhaust fan will come on, drawing more air to the fire, fanning it, and perhaps making matters worse.

EXHAUST TIMER

This convenient feature turns off the fan after a set period of time.



JENNAIR

MAKE IT LAST

Regular upkeep improves performance

These five simple steps will help you make sure that your range hood ventilates most efficiently.

- 1. Follow installation directions.** Range hoods are usually installed 18 to 30 inches above a cooktop, giving you room to work while preventing steam from escaping to the sides.
- 2. Vent it to the outside.** Doing that will ensure that the range hood vents as much smoke, cooking odors, and heat as possible. Be sure to use solid, smooth-walled metal ductwork and have the seams sealed with good-quality ventilation-duct sealant, not just duct tape.

- 3. Keep duct runs short and straight.** Both of those steps will help maximize airflow. The larger the diameter or cross section of duct that can be installed, the better it can minimize flow restriction and help avoid adding to a ventilation hood's noise.
- 4. Prevent backdrafts.** Use a wall or roof cap with a damper outside to prevent precipitation and outdoor air from flowing in.
- 5. Clean the filters.** Wash or replace the filters underneath the hood every one to three months, or more if you cook often.

How to choose

Don't size down.

This is one time when bigger is often better. Any hood that you consider should be at least as wide as the cooking surface it will be installed above. And avoid downdraft ventilation systems, which have been unimpressive in our tests.

Select the right style.

An **undercabinet** hood is mounted on the bottom of a wall cabinet. If it's on an exterior wall, ductwork can be routed through the cabinet and then outside, or directly through the back of the hood. In other cases, ductwork must be routed through the cabinet. **Wall-chimney** hoods can work where there are no cabinets. They're mounted with exposed vent stacks on the wall. **Island** hoods are mounted to and vented through ductwork in the ceiling. They lack a wall or cabinets alongside them to help funnel fumes, so consider one that's at least 6 inches wider than the cooktop. **Downdraft** hoods try to reverse the direction of rising smoke and fumes and exhaust them through ducts running beneath the floor. Our past tests found they were among the least effective at removing smoke and steam. While they can be used anywhere in the kitchen, their main application is in islands where it might not be possible to route ductwork through the ceiling.

CFM isn't everything.

Manufacturer claims about airflow tout cubic feet per minute (CFM) of air exhausted. More airflow does result in faster venting but doesn't necessarily guarantee better capture and removal of smoke and fumes.

Microwave ovens

Grilling, convection baking, and even slow-cooking features mean today's microwaves can do far more than reheat leftovers.



SPEED AND SMARTS now go hand in hand as more microwaves serve as second ovens. Many have sensors that automate cooking for more than just popcorn. More also include convection and even slow cooking for homeowners who want added cooking capability without having to add a wall oven or replace a range with a double-oven model.

You'll find more automation as microwaves take on a growing list of tasks. Browning and speed-cook modes,

along with interactive recipe databases, are also on the menu as brands push added capability for busy families. But as our tests have shown, you can pay a premium for those perks without getting the even heating and defrosting that are a microwave's two top tasks. Our Ratings also show that some brands overstate usable space by as much as 50 to 60 percent of what's claimed, so take a large casserole dish to the store to be sure it fits. And see our Ratings for the real deal.



Tip

Microwave ovens come in a range of wattages. But when we tested three GE microwaves, we found that the differences in wattage among the ovens didn't make much difference in their performance.

How to choose

Pick a type and size.

Countertop microwave ovens usually cost less than over-the-range microwaves and are a fine choice if counter space isn't a concern. Though compact models tend to cost the least, midsize and large models offer more room for not much more money. (Our Ratings start with midsize models, the bestselling type.) Over-the-range microwave ovens save counter space by taking the place of a range hood. They vent themselves and the cooktop below, but are unlikely to capture steam, heat, and smoke as well as a dedicated range hood.

Weigh the features.

A sensor helps prevent undercooking and overcooking by turning off the microwave when food is done. Shortcut keys take the guesswork out of preparing an ever-expanding menu of common foods, and a convection mode can help provide browning like a conventional oven. Microwave models that can hang beneath a wall cabinet will free up some counter space.

Question capacity claims.

Certain models effectively deliver as little as half of the claimed interior space if you use the included turntable or moving platter. So check the Ratings for our measurements, and take your largest casserole dish to the store to make sure it fits comfortably inside. Also consider models with a sliding tray that moves from side to side and fits large plates or those that allow you to turn the turntable off when you're using a large platter or dish.

Details that count

● POWER RATING

Midsize and large ovens are usually rated at 850 to 1,250 watts, compact at 600 to 800 watts. More watts should produce more heat. But you probably won't notice differences of 100 watts or so.

● REMOVABLE RACKS

These allow you to cook several foods at once. But taller items might require removing a rack.

● TURNTABLE VS. TRAY

A microwave must keep food moving to ensure uniform heating and cooking. Some have replaced a round turntable with a rectangular tray that slides from side to side, a plus for platters.

● CONVECTION COOKING, GRILLING, AND BROWNING

Convection might add to a model's price, but good grilling and browning performance shouldn't.

● SENSOR

Certain models have more than 20 auto-settings. They can tailor a heating cycle to the food, but you'll still need to know the portion size. Convenient? Sure, but paying extra for shortcut keys you might not use makes little sense.

● NUMERIC KEYPAD

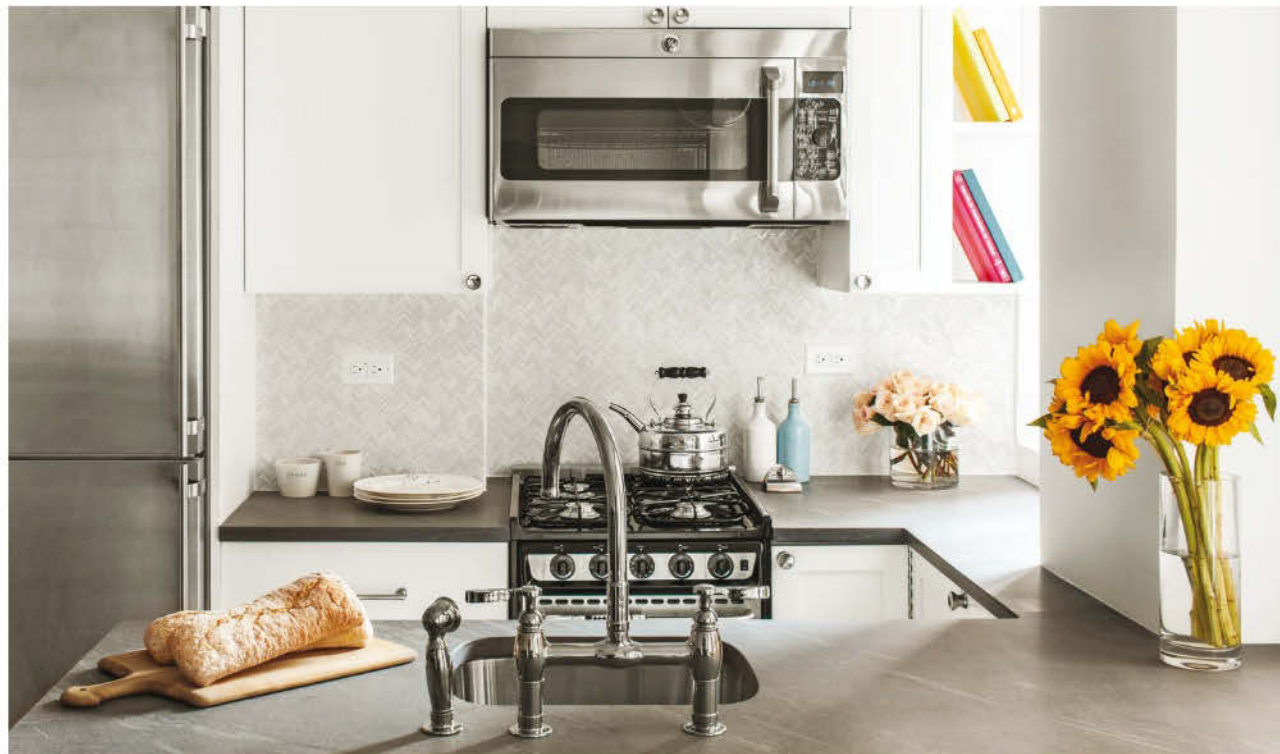
Use it to set cooking times and power levels. It might be easier to use; many have preset cooking times for a variety of dishes.

● 1-MINUTE OR 30-SECOND KEY

They extend the preset cooking time, maintaining the power level selected. They also allow quick adjustments to your previous settings.



Product guide



↓ COUNTERTOP MICROWAVES

These models are best for kitchens with lots of counter space. You can mount some models below or within cabinetry.

Pros Countertop microwaves usually cost less than over-the-range models and simply plug into an ordinary outlet; no installation is required.

Cons Mid-sized and large models we tested take about 3 square feet of valuable counter space.



BUILT-IN MICROWAVES →

Built-in microwaves are installed within custom cabinets, flush with the bottom of flanking cabinets. Certain built-in models don't have finished sides, nor do they have vents.

Pros Built-ins keep counters clear and allow you to have a range hood.

Cons They're relatively expensive. Installation adds to the cost and might require an electrician.

↑ OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVES

Space-saving over-the-range microwaves (sometimes called OTRs) can be vented to the outside and can save space in a small kitchen.

Pros Over-the-range microwaves leave the counter workspace clear.

Cons They cost more, and installation might require an electrician. And even the best don't vent as well as a capable, correctly sized range hood.



RECOMMENDED MODELS

Large countertop

**Expert's
PICK**



“The Kenmore Elite 74229 microwave (1.3 cu. ft.), scored well in all our tests and the preprogrammed settings for reheating foods, cooking frozen pizza, and popping popcorn makes it really convenient to use.”

—Larry Ciufo, Consumer Reports Senior Project Leader

B8 KENMORE ELITE 74229

Type Large countertop

Price \$180

kenmore.com

Large countertop



B1 PANASONIC INVERTER NN-H965BF

Type Large countertop

Price \$180

This 2.2-cubic-foot, 1,250-watt model with a sensor and auto-defrost is very good at heating evenness and fast at heating water, but it's relatively noisy on high. A large 9x15-inch glass baking dish rotates on its turntable. panasonic.com



B2 LG LCRT2010[ST]

Type Large countertop

Price \$200

This 2.0-cubic-foot, 1,200-watt model was very good at defrosting, heating evenness, and was fast at heating. It's easy to use and relatively quiet on high. The sensor lets you know when food is ready. lg.com

Over-the-range



D1 GE PROFILE PVM9215SFSS

Type Over-the-range

Price \$550

This 2.1-cubic-foot, 1,000-watt model provides very good heating evenness and excellent defrosting, ease of use and quietness. It has detailed prompts, a popcorn program, and a wire rack for bi-level cooking. geappliances.com



D2 GE JVM3160RFSS

✓ CR Best Buy

Type Over-the-range

Price \$250

This 1.6-cubic-foot, 1,000-watt model offers very good heating evenness and excellent defrosting, ease of use, and quietness. It has detailed prompts, popcorn program, and is available in stainless or stainless-look option. geappliances.com



D3 GE JVM7195SFSS

Type Over-the-range

Price \$400

This 1.6-cubic-foot, 1,000-watt model was impressive overall and was the fastest at heating of the three top-scoring GE models, but it wasn't as quiet as they were. It has the same usable capacity as the other two GE models and is equipped with a sensor and child lock. geappliances.com

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

A. MIDSIZED COUNTERTOP

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS								FEATURES				
					Heating Evenness	Defrosting Evenness	Speed of Heating	Microwaving Noise	Ease of Use	Venting (Air Flow)	Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed Prompts	Convection Mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look Option
	1	Avanti MO1250TW	\$130	70	●	●	●	●	●	NA	0.8	1.2	1000				
	2	LG LCS1112ST	\$140	68	●	●	●	●	●	NA	0.6	1.1	1000				•
	3	Kenmore 72123	\$150	68	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.2	1100			•	•
	4	Kenmore 66227 [Item # 1345111] (Kmart)	\$105	68	○	●	○	●	●	NA	0.6	1.1	1100				
	5	Frigidaire FFCM1134L[S]	\$120	68	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.5	1.1	1100				•
	6	Panasonic Genius Prestige NN-SD681S	\$180	68	●	●	●	○	●	NA	0.7	1.2	1200			•	
	7	West Bend AG028PLV	\$110	67	●	●	○	●	○	NA	0.5	1.1	1000				•
	8	Danby DMW111KBLDB	\$90	65	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.6	1.1	1000				
	9	Panasonic Prestige NN-SD372S	\$140	60	○	●	○	●	●	NA	0.5	0.9	950				
	10	Sharp R331ZS	\$125	60	○	●	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.1	1000				•
	11	Cuisinart CMW-200	\$250	57	●	○	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.2	1000		•		•
	12	LG LCSP1110[ST]	\$230	57	○	●	○	●	○	NA	0.6	1.1	1000				•
	13	GE Profile PEM31SFSS	\$320	53	●	●	●	●	●	NA	0.6	1.1	800			•	•
	14	Frigidaire FFCT1278L[S]	\$300	52	○	●	○	○	●	NA	0.8	1.2	1100	•	•		•
	15	Sharp Steamwave AX-1100S	\$500	51	●	○	○	●	○	NA	0.6	1.0	1150			•	•
	16	Half Time AAC34-S	\$200	48	●	●	●	○	●	NA	0.7	1.2	1000		•		•
	17	Cuisinart CMW-100	\$180	43	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.0	1000				•
	18	RCA RMW1138	\$80	42	○	●	●	●	●	NA	0.7	1.1	1000				•
	19	GE Profile Spacemaker II PEM31DM[BB]	\$250	38	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.5	1.0	800			•	•

B. LARGE COUNTERTOP

✓	1	Panasonic Inverter NN-H965BF	\$180	76	●	●	●	○	●	NA	1.4	2.2	1250	•		•	
✓	2	LG LCRT2010[ST]	\$200	75	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1.2	2.0	1200	•		•	•
✓	3	GE Profile JES2251SJ[SS]	\$280	75	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1.5	2.2	1200	•		•	•
	4	GE JES2051SN[SS]	\$250	72	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1.2	2.0	1200	•		•	•
	5	Maytag UMC5200BA[B]	\$270	72	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1.1	2.0	1100	•		•	
	6	Oster OGG61403	\$120	71	●	●	●	●	●	NA	0.8	1.4	1200				•
	7	Panasonic Prestige NN-SD997[S]	\$280	70	●	○	●	●	●	NA	1.4	2.2	1250			•	•
	8	Kenmore Elite 74229 Elite 75223	\$180	70	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1.3	2.2	1200			•	•
	9	Frigidaire Gallery FGMO205K[F]	\$320	69	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1.2	2.0	1200	•		•	•
	10	KitchenAid KCMS2255BSS	\$540	69	●	○	●	●	●	NA	1.3	2.2	1200			•	•
	11	Whirlpool WMC50522AWS	\$270	69	●	○	●	●	●	NA	1.3	2.2	1200			•	•
	12	GE Profile PEB7226SFSS	\$330	67	●	●	○	●	●	NA	1.3	2.2	1100	•		•	•
	13	Panasonic Inverter NN-CD989[S]	\$650	67	○	●	○	●	●	NA	1.2	1.5	1100	•	•	•	•
	14	Kenmore 73163	\$170	67	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.9	1.6	1100			•	•

✓ CR Best Buy ✓ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE is based mainly on evenness of heating, ease of use, and auto-defrosting ability. The displayed score is out of a total of 100 points.

HEATING EVENNESS reflects how evenly a model reheated a dish of cold mashed potatoes. **DEFROSTING EVENNESS** is based on how well the automatic-defrost program defrosted a pound of frozen ground beef. **SPEED OF HEATING** is based on the temperature rise of water heated.

MICROWAVING NOISE reflects how quiet the oven is while microwaving on high. **EASE OF USE** includes how easy it is to set the microwave without referring to the instructions. **VENTING (AIR FLOW)** is based on the volume of air drawn in by the OTR's internal fan on the highest setting.

USABLE CAPACITY is the usable space based on our measurements and excludes the corner spaces for models with rotating turntables. Note that most over-the-range models allow you to turn the rotation off to fit large dishes. (A few countertop models also offer that feature.) With the rotation off, measured capacity approximates claimed. But food might require extra tending and stirring. **PRICE** is approximate retail.

B. LARGE COUNTERTOP continued

Recommended	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS							FEATURES					
					Heating Evenness	Defrosting Evenness	Speed of Heating	Microwaving Noise	Ease of Use	Venting (Air Flow)	Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed Prompts	Convection Mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look Option
	15	LG LCRT1510SV	\$190	67	○	●	●	●	●	NA	0.9	1.5	1200	•		•	•
	16	Sharp R551ZS	\$160	66	○	●	○	●	●	NA	1.1	1.8	1100			•	•
	17	Magic Chef MCD1611ST	\$140	66	●	●	●	○	●	NA	1.1	1.6	1100				•
	18	Sharp R651ZS	\$180	65	○	●	○	●	●	NA	1.3	2.2	1100			•	•
	19	Kenmore Elite 74153	\$300	65	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.8	1.5	1000		•	•	•
	20	Frigidaire FFCE2278L[S]	\$190	65	●	●	●	○	○	NA	1.3	2.2	1200	•		•	•
	21	Electrolux EI24MO45IB	\$470	64	●	○	○	○	●	NA	1.2	2.0	1100	•		•	
	22	Magic Chef MCD1811ST	\$140	64	○	●	●	●	●	NA	1.1	1.8	1100				•
	23	LG LCRT1513ST	\$150	63	○	●	●	●	●	NA	0.9	1.5	1100			•	•
	24	Frigidaire FFCE1439LB	\$150	63	●	●	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.4	1100			•	
	25	Panasonic Inverter NN-SD797[S]	\$200	63	●	●	●	○	●	NA	1.4	1.6	1250	•		•	•
	26	Sharp R930CS	\$530	63	○	●	○	●	○	NA	1.1	1.5	900	•	•	•	•
	27	Panasonic Genius Prestige NN-SE982S	\$300	63	●	●	●	○	●	NA	1.4	2.2	1250			•	•
	28	Danby DMW14SA1BDB	\$150	61	○	○	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.4	1100			•	
	29	Magic Chef MCD1311ST	\$130	61	●	○	○	●	●	NA	0.9	1.3	1100				•
	30	LG LCS1410[SW]	\$170	60	●	○	●	○	●	NA	0.9	1.4	1200	•		•	
	31	LG LCS1413SB	\$170	60	○	●	○	●	●	NA	0.9	1.4	1100			•	
	32	Emerson MW1337SB	\$110	59	○	●	○	●	●	NA	0.7	1.3	1000				•
	33	Sharp R409YV R431ZS	\$130	57	○	●	○	●	○	NA	0.9	1.3	1000				•
	34	Frigidaire FFCE1638L[S]	\$150	57	●	○	○	●	●	NA	0.9	1.6	1100	•		•	•
	35	Whirlpool WMC30516A[S]	\$210	56	○	○	●	●	●	NA	0.9	1.6	1200			•	•
	36	Haier MWM13110G[SS]	\$105	50	○	○	○	●	●	NA	0.6	1.3	1000				•

C. BUILT-IN COUNTERTOP

1	Sharp SuperSteam Oven AX-1200[K]	\$900	57	●	●	●	○	●	●	NA	1.0	1.1	700	•	•	•	
2	Sharp Carousel R-1214	\$380	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	NA	0.9	1.5	1100	•		•	•

D. OVER-THE-RANGE

✓	1	GE Profile PVM9215SFSS	\$550	81	●	●	○	●	●	●	0.9	2.1	1000	•		•	•
✓	2	GE JVM3160RFSS	\$250	79	●	●	○	●	●	●	0.9	1.6	1000	•			•
✓	3	GE JVM7195SFSS	\$400	76	●	●	●	●	●	●	0.9	1.9	1100	•		•	•
✓	4	LG LMH2235ST	\$450	74	●	●	○	●	●	○	1.4	2.2	1000	•		•	•
	5	Whirlpool WMH53520CS	\$350	70	●	●	○	●	●	○	0.9	2.0	1000	•		•	•
	6	Samsung ME21F707MJT	\$500	68	●	●	○	○	●	●	0.9	2.1	1000	•		•	•
	7	Electrolux IQ-Touch EI30BM60MS	\$630	67	●	●	○	●	●	○	0.9	1.8	1050	•	•	•	•
	8	Kenmore Elite 80373	\$700	67	●	●	●	●	●	●	0.9	1.8	1050	•	•	•	•
	9	GE AVM4160DFBS	\$250	67	●	●	●	●	●	○	0.8	1.6	1000	•			•
	10	Samsung SMH2117[S]	\$500	67	●	●	○	●	●	●	0.8	2.1	1000	•		•	•
	11	Maytag MMV4205DS	\$350	67	●	●	○	●	●	○	1.0	2.0	1000	•		•	•
	12	Frigidaire Gallery FGMV174K[M]	\$350	65	●	●	○	●	●	●	0.8	1.7	1000	•		•	
	13	LG LMV1813[SW]	\$300	65	●	●	●	●	●	○	0.8	1.8	1100	•		•	•
	14	Whirlpool Gold WMH76719CS	\$550	65	●	●	○	●	●	○	0.9	1.9	1100	•	•	•	•
	15	LG LMHM2017[SW]	\$450	65	●	●	●	●	●	●	0.9	2.0	1100	•		•	•
	16	Maytag MMV5219DS	\$400	64	○	○	○	●	●	○	1.2	2.1	1000	•		•	•
	17	Electrolux Icon E30MH65QPS	\$900	64	○	●	●	●	●	○	0.9	1.8	1050	•	•	•	•
	18	Whirlpool WMH73521CS	\$450	63	○	●	○	●	●	○	0.9	2.1	1100	•		•	•
	19	Bosch 300 Series HMV3052U	\$400	62	●	●	●	●	●	○	0.8	1.6	1000				•
	20	LG LMH2016[ST]	\$300	62	●	●	●	●	●	●	0.8	2.0	1100	•		•	•
	21	Kenmore 80339	\$300	61	●	●	○	●	●	●	0.8	1.7	1000	•		•	•

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

D. OVER-THE-RANGE continued

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results								Features						
					Heating Evenness	Defrosting Evenness	Speed of Heating	Microwaving Noise	Ease of Use	Venting (Air Flow)	Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed Prompts	Convection Mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-Look Option		
	22	Kenmore 80353	\$570	61	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.9	2.1	1100	•		•	•		
	23	Samsung ME179KFET[SR]	\$600	61	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	950				•		
	24	Maytag MMV4203W[B]	\$280	61	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	0.9	2.0	1000	•					
	25	GE JVM6172SFSS	\$280	61	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.7	1.7	1000	•			•		
	26	Electrolux EI30BM55H[S]	\$700	60	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	1.0	2.0	1000	•		•	•		
	27	Ikea Framtid 501.423.37	\$250	60	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.6	950	•			•		
	28	Amana AMV1150VA[B]	\$190	60	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.5	1000	•					
	29	Dacor Discovery PCOR30S	\$1,270	60	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.7	1.1	850	•	•	•	•		
	30	Fisher & Paykel CMOH30SS	\$750	60	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.7	1.1	850	•	•	•	•		
	31	Samsung SMH1622[S]	\$170	60	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	0.8	1.6	850				•		
	32	Kenmore 80323	\$260	59	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.6	1000	•			•		
	33	Maytag MMV6190DS	\$550	59	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.9	1.9	1000	•	•	•	•		
	34	Samsung Chef Collection ME21H9900AS	\$600	59	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	1.0	2.1	1000	•		•	•		
	35	KitchenAid KHHC2090S[SS]	\$1,100	59	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	1.1	2.0	1200	•	•	•	•		
	36	Frigidaire Gallery FGMV175QF	\$360	58	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	1000	•		•	•		
	37	Kenmore 80349	\$350	58	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	1000	•		•	•		
	38	GE Profile PVM1790SR[SS]	\$600	57	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	1000	•	•	•	•		
	39	Electrolux IQ-Touch EI30SM55JS	\$650	57	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	1.0	2.0	1000			•	•		
	40	LG LMV1831ST	\$300	56	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.8	1000			•	•		
	41	GE Profile Advantium PSA1201R[SS]	\$950	56	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	925	•	•	•	•		
	42	Samsung ME18H704SFS	\$250	55	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.9	1.8	1000			•	•		
	43	Bosch 800 Series HMV8052U	\$700	55	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.8	1000		•	•	•		
	44	Maytag MMV6186W[S]	\$680	55	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.8	1000	•		•	•		
	45	Jenn-Air JMV9196CS	\$1,000	55	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.9	1.9	1000	•	•	•	•		
	46	Samsung MC17F808KDT	\$540	55	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	950	•	•	•	•		
	47	Bosch 500 Series HMV5052U	\$500	54	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	1.0	2.1	1100			•	•		
	48	LG LMV1683[ST]	\$270	54	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	0.7	1.6	1000	•			•		
	49	GE JVM1750DP[BB]	\$280	54	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	1000	•		•	•		
	50	Kenmore Elite 80363	\$630	54	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.7	1.5	900	•	•	•	•		
	51	Samsung SMH1926[S] (Lowe's)	\$360	53	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.9	1000	•		•	•		
	52	Sharp R-1875T	\$500	53	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.7	1.1	850	•		•			
	53	Whirlpool WMH32517AS	\$320	53	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.7	1000	•		•	•		
	54	Frigidaire MWV150K[W]	\$190	52	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	0.8	1.5	900						

Ultimate speed cooker

You can put an entire dinner on the table using the microwave by following these cooking tips:

Fish Sole, flounder, and other thin fillets turn out tender and moist. Simply cover and cook until the fish is milky white and reaches an internal temperature of 145° F.

Vegetables Add 1 to 3 table-

spoons of water to a bowl, and season and cover the vegetables with wax paper or a paper towel to hold in moisture and reduce splatters.

Chicken A whole chicken won't taste great out of the

microwave, but you can cut cooking time in the oven or on an outdoor grill by first partially cooking chicken pieces in a microwave oven. The same goes for long-cooking vegetables, such as winter squash.

Melted chocolate Place chopped pieces in a microwave-safe bowl and heat on medium for 1 minute, then stir. Continue in 15-second increments, stirring after each, until the chocolate is fully melted.

D. OVER-THE-RANGE continued

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results								Features						
					Heating Evenness	Defrosting Evenness	Speed of Heating	Microwaving Noise	Ease of Use	Venting (Air Flow)	Usable Capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed Capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed Prompts	Convection Mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look Option		
	55	Hotpoint RVM1535DM[WW]	\$190	51	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	0.8	1.5	950	●				
	56	KitchenAid KHMS2040BSS	\$520	51	○	●	○	●	●	●	○	0.9	2.0	1000	●			●	
	57	Frigidaire FFMV162L[S]	\$250	50	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.8	1.6	1000				●	
	58	Viking D3 Series RDMOR200SS	\$650	50	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.9	1.5	950	●		●	●	
	59	Amana AMV2175VAS	\$290	50	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.9	1.7	1000	●		●	●	
	60	Viking VMOR205[SS]	\$1,300	50	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.7	1.1	850	●	●	●	●	
	61	Maytag MMV5208W[W]	\$320	50	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	1.2	2.0	1000	●			●	
	62	Samsung ME17H703SHS	\$300	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	0.7	1.7	1000			●	●	
	63	Electrolux IQ-Touch EI30SM35QS	\$600	49	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.7	1.5	900	●	●	●	●	
	64	Jenn-Air JMV8208WS	\$750	49	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	1.4	2.0	1000	●		●	●	
	65	Whirlpool WMH31017A[S]	\$250	49	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	0.9	1.7	1000					
	66	Maytag MMV1164[W]	\$210	49	○	●	○	○	●	●	○	0.9	1.6	1000				●	
	67	KitchenAid KHMC1857W[SS]	\$650	49	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.9	1.8	1000	●	●	●	●	
	68	Sharp R-1405	\$220	48	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.8	1.4	950				●	
	69	LG LMVH1711[ST]	\$550	47	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	0.8	1.7	950	●		●	●	
	70	Jenn-Air JMV9186W[S]	\$900	47	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	0.8	1.8	1000	●	●	●	●	
	71	Frigidaire FFMV154CL[S]	\$450	47	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	0.7	1.5	900		●		●	
	72	Magic Chef MCO165UB	\$170	46	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	0.8	1.6	1000	●			●	
	73	Frigidaire FFMV152CLB	\$400	46	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	0.7	1.5	900		●			
	74	Sharp R-1871	\$600	45	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	0.6	1.1	850	●	●	●		
	75	Samsung ME16H702SES	\$250	44	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	0.8	1.6	1000				●	
	76	Frigidaire Professional FPBM189K[F]	\$480	44	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	1.0	2.0	1000	●		●	●	
	77	Frigidaire Gallery FGMV154CL[F]	\$480	43	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	0.7	1.5	900	●	●	●	●	
	78	Bertazzoni Professional Series KO30PROX	\$700	38	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.8	1.0	950	●		●	●	
	79	Sharp R-1514	\$330	36	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	0.9	1.5	1000	●		●	●	

✓ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ○ Fair ● Poor

Most & least reliable brands

Nearly 37,000 owners sound off

OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVES

Whirlpool	6%	KitchenAid	8%
Maytag	6%	GE	8%
Frigidaire	7%	LG	9%
Kenmore	7%	Samsung	16%

Source: Consumer Reports Annual Product Reliability Survey. Our findings are based on nearly 37,000 over-the-range microwave ovens that consumers bought new between 2010 and 2014. Each rate represents the percentage of OTRs that were ever repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 3 points aren't meaningful. Models within a brand may vary, and design and manufacture changes may affect future reliability.

REPAIR OR REPLACE?

The survey examined products through the first eight years of ownership.

Over-the-range

1-2 yr. REPAIR	3-4 yr. CONSIDER REPAIR	5+ yr. REPLACE
--------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------

Median repair cost **\$132**

TIP Some top-rated models are in the \$200-to-\$300 range, so you might be better off with a replacement if you're facing an expensive repair bill.

Dishwashers

Powerful cleaning performance, plus water and energy savings—today's top dishwashers do it all.



Tip

A cycle-time display can be a convenient feature on models that have the controls hidden at the top of the door.

AMANA

TOUGHER NEW RULES have slashed the energy and water dishwashers can use to get the government's Energy Star seal. But our latest tests show that you don't have to live with dirty dishes or endless cycles. Better yet, some of the biggest energy misers are easy on your wallet.

Dishwashers built since January 2012 must use about 9 percent less electricity and 27 percent less water to meet the federal EPA's Energy Star standard. Our top picks qualify for that coveted seal. Energy Star standards for dishwashers recently added wash-performance components. The Department of Energy, which sets the underlying standards, bases them on lightly soiled loads. Consumer Reports has urged them to use much dirtier loads, as we do in our tests.

We slather plates with egg yolks, peanut butter, raspberry jam, and other stubborn goo to see which dishwashers made our clean-plate club. Our results show that it's easy to pay a tidy sum for so-so performance. You can also pay less and get more noise than you expected. Read on for what else to consider.

REPAIR OR REPLACE?

The survey examined products through the first eight years of ownership.

Over-the-range

1-3 yr.	4-5 yr.	6+ yr.
REPAIR	CONSIDER REPAIR	REPLACE

Median repair cost **\$153**

TIP If your home has hard water, a whole-house water softener might improve cleaning results.



How to choose

In addition to better energy and water efficiency, today's dishwashers offer a host of options. Use these tips to decide which are most useful for you.

Match your habits.

Our picks clean well enough for you to skip prerinsing. If you want to prerinse, skip extra-cost power-scrubbing modes. And if you're concerned about noise, opt for a manual-clean filter rather than a self-cleaning filter, which tends to be noisier.

Look for features that boost convenience.

Dishwashers that score well for ease of use usually include adjustable racks and lots of flatware slots.

Some mid-priced models have third racks that let you lay down large utensils or short cups. Many also have fold-down tines, which let you fit large or odd-shaped dishes and other dinnerware. Stainless-steel tubs resist stains better than white plastic tubs, though some plastic tubs are speckled gray for less noticeable staining.

Check the controls.

Some models include interactive touch controls, but the usual touchpads are fine if

they're clearly marked. Also look for a cycle-time display if you opt for controls that are hidden when the door is closed. Many models with hidden controls display a light or other indicator to tell you the dishwasher is running, a plus for extra-quiet models.

Check the dimensions.

The width and depth of every conventional dishwasher is intended for a cavity measuring 24x24 inches. But the height of the specific model that you're

considering could pose an installation challenge if—since the time you installed the previous dishwasher—you replaced your kitchen floor or put in a new countertop that dips lower than flush with the bottom edge. Either or both changes could leave less vertical space and require you to buy a slightly shorter dishwasher. Before settling on a model, measure your space and ask the seller for the full height range, accounting for adjustment of the leveling feet.

Details that count

● HALF-LOAD OPTION

It's always more efficient to wash a full load of dishes. But if you frequently wash half-loads—say, just glasses—a model with a half-load option might help you save some energy and water compared with running a half-load in a dishwasher without that feature.

● FILTERS

These keep wash water free of food that could be redeposited on clean dishes. There are two filter types: manual and self-cleaning. Most manufacturers have moved to manual ones because most self-cleaning filters, which use a grinder to pulverize debris and flush it down the drain with the water, are convenient but can be noisier.

● ADJUSTABLE RACKS AND LOADING AIDS

Racks that move up and down (pictured above), adjustable tines, silverware and stemware holders, and third-row utensil racks let you organize dishwasher contents. Those features increase flexibility, especially when you cook for a crowd, and they can help accommodate large and odd-shaped items, such as cookie sheets and stockpots. Flatware slots also tend to improve cleaning by preventing silverware from nesting.



WHIRLPOOL



● STAINLESS-STEEL TUB

Steel is more durable and stain-resistant than plastic, but dishwasher models with a plastic tub tend to cost far less. Even a standard plastic tub should last longer than most people tend to keep a dishwasher.

● RINSE/HOLD CYCLE

This lets you rinse dirty dishes before you're ready to start a full cycle, reducing potentially unpleasant odors and preventing soil from setting while you accumulate enough dirty dishes to run a full load.

● WASH ZONES

Some newer models have designated a certain part of the dishwasher for heavily soiled items intended for washing in a special cycle. Such zones don't necessarily run the whole time—with certain models, it's only for a few minutes—but they so far seem to work as promised.

● SOIL SENSOR

It adjusts water use and cycle length to the amount of soil on the dishes. A sensor can improve energy efficiency.

● SPECIAL WASH CYCLES

Most dishwashers come with at least three cycles: light, normal, and heavy (for pots and pans). Some also offer pot-scrubber, soak/scrub, steam-clean, china/crystal cycles, or a sanitizing cycle, which raises the water temperature above the usual 140° F, but the three basic cycles should be enough for most chores, even for baked-on food.



Expert advice: Load it right

What better way to end a fine meal than arguing over forks—up or down?—and fine china—yes or no? Personal preferences differ, but careful placement guarantees that dishes will be cleaned properly. Here are nine tips from our experts:

- 1 Make sure you have hot water coming out of the faucet before running the dishwasher or it will start the wash cycle with cold water.
- 2 Skip pre-rinsing, a real water waster, but scrape off food.
- 3 Load large items on the sides and in the back to avoid blocking water and dispenser.
- 4 Place the dirtier side of dishes toward the center of the machine, allowing for more exposure to the spray
- (some manufacturers' instructions may differ). Dishes shouldn't rest against each other.
- 5 Put dishwasher-safe plastic and delicate items on the top rack.
- 6 Rest glasses on prongs to prevent water from accumulating in them and breakage.
- 7 Load forks and spoons with their handles facing down, but place knives with their handles up, to avoid cutting yourself as you remove them. If your dishwasher has an open basket, mix
- flatware to prevent pieces from sticking together.
- 8 Place items with baked-on food facedown and toward the sprayer on the bottom rack.
- 9 Avoid putting brass, bronze, cast-iron, wood, or china with gold leaf in the machine. To keep china from chipping, don't allow dishes to touch other items, like pots and pans. If you decide to hand-wash your fine china and porcelain, line the sink with a towel to prevent chipping, and use a mild dish detergent.

RECOMMENDED MODELS

Dishwashers



1 KITCHENAID KDTM354DSS

Price \$1,080

Cycle time/water usage 125 min./4 gal. Along with stellar washing, drying, and efficient running, this fairly quiet model boasts a self-cleaning, ultrafine filter that breaks food particles down throughout the cycle without noisy grinding. Other pluses include a soil sensor and stainless-steel interior, delayed start, ample flatware slots, and an adjustable upper rack and tines. Some controls are hidden. kitchenaid.com



3 KENMORE ELITE 12783

Price \$1,200

Cycle time/water usage 135 min./5 gal. Top-notch washing and stellar energy and water efficiency are the chief strengths of this model. It's also among the quietest models. It has a soil sensor, a stainless-steel tub, a delayed-start option, ample flatware slots, and an adjustable upper rack and tines. Some controls are hidden. But it's only mediocre at drying plastic items. kenmore.com



4 BOSCH ASCENTA SHX3AR7[5]UC

✓ **CR Best Buy**

Price \$700

Cycle time/water usage 95 min./6 gal. This one aced our wash test and was very good at drying plastic items. It was among the quietest models, and was especially energy-efficient. Pluses include a soil sensor, a delayed-start option, ample flatware slots, an adjustable upper rack, adjustable tines. boschappliances.com



5 KITCHENAID KDFE454CSS

Price \$1,350

Cycle time/water usage 140 min./5 gal. Superb washing, energy efficiency, and quietness make this model a top pick. Pluses include a soil sensor, a stainless-steel tub, a delayed-start option, ample flatware slots, and an adjustable upper rack and tines. On the minus side, this model is mediocre at drying plastic items, and it has no time-remaining display. kitchenaid.com



6 THERMADOR TOPAZ SERIES DWHD-640JFM

Price \$1,500

Cycle time/water usage 125 min./6 gal. Top-notch washing and stellar energy and water efficiency are chief strengths of this model, though it's fairly pricey. It aced our wash test and was also among the quietest models. Pluses include a soil sensor, a stainless-steel interior, and a light that shines on the floor to indicate that the unit is running. thermador.com



7 BOSCH 800 PLUS SERIES SHX7PT55UC

Price \$1,300

Cycle time/water usage 125 min./5 gal. This model did great in our wash test and is among the quietest models. It's also very energy-efficient. Other pluses include a soil sensor, stainless-steel tub, water softener, and time-remaining display that's projected onto the floor. All controls are hidden, and you'll need to clean the filter manually. boschappliances.com

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

CONVENTIONAL DISHWASHERS

Rec.	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS					FEATURES						
					Washing	Energy Use	Noise	Ease of Use	Cycle Time (min.)	Ample Flatware Slots	Adjustable Upper Rack	Sensor	Self-cleaning Filter	Hidden Controls	Interior Material	Stainless/SS-look Option
✓	1	KitchenAid KDTM354DSS	\$1,080	85	●	●	●	●	125	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
✓	2	Kenmore Elite 12793	\$1,200	85	●	●	●	●	145	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
✓	3	Kenmore Elite 12783	\$1,070	82	●	●	●	●	135	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
✓	4	Bosch Ascenta SHX3AR7[5]UC	\$700	81	●	●	●	●	95	●	●	●	●	all	stainless/plastic	●
✓	5	KitchenAid KDFE454CSS	\$1,350	81	●	●	●	○	140	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
✓	6	Thermador Topaz Series DWHD640JFM	\$1,500	80	●	●	●	●	125	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
✓	7	Bosch 800 Plus Series SHX7PT55UC	\$1,300	80	●	●	●	●	125	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
✓	8	Bosch 500 Series SHP65T55UC	\$900	80	●	●	●	●	125	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●

Expert's
PICK



“Besides its excellent wash performance, it is the first with a motorized spray arm that, if it gets blocked by something falling through the rack, will reverse direction and continue to wash. Also, you can adjust the upper rack using one hand instead of two like all other models.”

— Larry Ciufu, Senior Project Leader,
Consumer Reports

2 KENMORE 12793

Price \$1,200

Cycle time/water usage 145 min./5 gal.

kenmore.com

CONVENTIONAL DISHWASHERS continued

Rec.	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS					FEATURES					
					Washing	Energy Use	Noise	Ease of Use	Cycle Time (min.)	Ample Flatware Slots	Adjustable Upper Rack	Sensor Self-cleaning Filter	Hidden Controls	Interior Material	Stainless/SS-look Option
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	Miele Futura Dimension G5575SCSF	\$1,950	80	●	●	●	●	150	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	Bosch 300 Series DLX SHX53TL5UC	\$850	80	●	●	○	●	125	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	Miele Futura Crystal G5225SS	\$1,370	79	●	●	●	●	150	●	●	●	none	stainless-steel	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12	Bosch 800 Series SHE68T55UC	\$950	79	●	●	●	●	125	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13	GE Profile PDT750SSFSS	\$1,100	79	●	●	●	●	140	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14	Blomberg DWT55300SS	\$850	79	●	●	○	●	130	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15	Viking 100 Series FDW101	\$800	79	●	●	○	●	130	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	16	GE Profile PDT760SSFSS	\$1,500	78	●	●	●	●	140	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	17	Blomberg DWT54100SS	\$750	78	●	●	○	●	85	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	18	Thermador Emerald Series DWHD440MFM	\$1,300	78	●	●	●	●	130	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	19	KitchenAid Architect Series II KDTE554CSS	\$1,600	78	●	●	●	○	145	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	20	Kenmore 13693	\$750	78	●	●	○	●	160	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	21	Kenmore 13223	\$600	77	●	●	○	●	160	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	22	Blomberg DWT55500SS	\$900	77	●	●	○	●	115	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	23	Viking 300 Series FDW300	\$1,100	77	●	●	○	●	115	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	24	GE Café CDT725SSFSS	\$1,000	77	●	●	○	●	145	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	25	Frigidaire Gallery FGHD2472PF	\$700	77	●	●	●	●	130	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	26	GE GDF540HMFES	\$600	77	●	●	●	○	155	●	●	●	no	stainless/plastic	●
	27	GE GDT580SSFSS	\$800	76	●	●	●	●	155	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	28	Thermador DWHD651JFP	\$2,200	76	●	●	●	●	120	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●

☒ CR Best Buy ☒ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE is mostly washing performance and includes energy and water use (not shown), noise, ease of use, and cycle time. Displayed scores are rounded; models are listed by precise overall score. **WASHING** is normal-cycle results with a very dirty full load. **ENERGY USE** is energy and water use for a normal cycle. **NOISE** covers listener judgments and sound-level measurements. **EASE OF USE** includes convenience factors and loading. **CYCLE TIME** (rounded to the nearest 5 minutes) is for a normal cycle with a very dirty full load; it includes temperature-boost option and, if available, heated dry. **UNDER BRAND & MODEL**, bracketed letters or numbers mean color code. **PRICE** is approximate retail.

Ratings

All tested models in performance order.

CONVENTIONAL DISHWASHERS continued

Rec.	Rank	BRAND & MODEL	PRICE	SCORE	TEST RESULTS					FEATURES						
					Washing	Energy Use	Noise	Ease of Use	Cycle Time (min.)	Ample Flatware Slots	Adjustable Upper Rack	Sensor	Self-cleaning Filter	Hidden Controls	Interior Material	Stainless/SS-look Option
	29	Maytag MDB8959SBS	\$800	75	●	●	○	●	115	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	
	30	Whirlpool WDT720PADM	\$460	75	●	●	●	●	155	●	●	●	●	all	plastic	●
	31	Kenmore 13202	\$475	75	●	●	○	●	155	●	●	●	●	no	plastic	
	32	Bosch 300 Series SHP53U55UC	\$850	75	●	●	●	●	160	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	33	Bosch 800 Plus Series SHE9PT55UC	\$1,950	75	●	●	●	●	130	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	34	LG LDS5040ST	\$700	75	●	●	●	●	110	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	35	Samsung DW80F800UWS	\$800	75	●	●	●	●	140	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	36	GE GDT550HSDSS	\$650	74	●	●	●	●	155	●	●	●	●	some	stainless/plastic	●
	37	Bosch 500 Series SHE65U55UC	\$900	74	●	●	●	●	160	●	●	●	●	none	stainless-steel	●
	38	GE Monogram ZDT870SPFSS	\$1,800	74	●	●	●	●	150	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	39	Samsung Chef Collection DW80H9970US	\$1,450	74	●	●	●	●	155	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	40	Bosch 800 Series SHX78U55UC	\$1,000	74	●	●	●	●	160	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	41	Miele Futura Crystal G5105SC	\$1,530	74	●	●	○	●	145	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	42	Kenmore 13473	\$500	73	●	●	○	○	160	●	●	●	●	some	plastic	●
	43	GE GDT680SSHSS	\$700	73	●	●	○	●	155	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	44	Kenmore Elite 1396[3]	\$1,000	73	●	●	●	○	135	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	45	LG LDF7551[ST]	\$900	72	●	●	●	●	145	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	46	LG LDF8072[ST]	\$1,100	72	●	●	●	●	145	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	47	Samsung DMT800RH[W]	\$750	72	●	●	○	●	120	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	48	LG LDS5540ST	\$800	71	●	●	●	●	145	●	●	●	●	No	stainless-steel	●
	49	Dacor Renaissance RDW24S	\$1,700	71	●	●	○	●	150	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	50	Whirlpool WDT920SADM	\$720	70	●	●	●	●	160	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	51	Miele Futura Classic G4205SC	\$1,000	70	●	●	●	○	145	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	52	Maytag MDB8969SDM	\$800	70	●	●	○	●	170	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	53	Asko D5894XXL[HS]	\$2,400	69	●	●	●	●	130	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	54	GE GDF520PSD[SS]	\$500	69	●	●	●	○	150	●	●	●	●	no	plastic	●
	55	GE Monogram ZDT800SSFSS	\$1,500	69	●	●	●	●	165	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	56	KitchenAid KDTE404DSS	\$1,080	69	●	●	●	●	175	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	57	Maytag MDB4949SDM	\$650	69	●	●	○	●	170	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	58	Asko D5634XXL[HS]	\$1,350	68	●	●	○	●	150	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	59	Whirlpool Gold WDT770PAY[M]	\$700	68	●	●	○	●	115	●	●	●	●	all	plastic	●
	60	KitchenAid KDFE304DSS	\$850	68	●	●	●	○	175	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	61	Miele Futura Diamond G5975SCSF	\$2,700	67	●	●	●	●	130	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	62	LG LDF8874ST	\$1,000	67	●	●	●	●	150	●	●	●	●	some	stainless-steel	●
	63	Frigidaire Gallery FGHD2465N[F]	\$600	66	●	●	○	●	130	●	●	●	●	some	plastic	●
	65	Jenn-Air Trifecta JDB8700AW[P]	\$1,550	66	●	●	●	○	170	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	66	Whirlpool WDF540PADM	\$500	66	●	●	○	○	115	●	●	●	●	no	plastic	●
	67	GE Artistry ADT521PGFBS	\$500	66	●	●	○	○	155	●	●	●	●	some	plastic	
	68	Scholtes LFDS3XL60HZ	\$1,400	66	●	●	●	●	105	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	69	Frigidaire Gallery FGBD2445N[F]	\$550	65	●	●	○	●	120	●	●	●	●	no	plastic	●
	70	Kenmore 1326[3]	\$700	65	●	●	○	●	130	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●

CONVENTIONAL DISHWASHERS continued

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Score	Test Results					Features						
					Washing	Energy Use	Noise	Ease of Use	Cycle Time (min.)	Ample Flatware Slots	Adjustable Upper Rack	Sensor	Self-cleaning Filter	Hidden Controls	Interior Material	Stainless/SS-look Option
	71	Smeg STA8614XU	\$1,000	65	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	120	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	72	KitchenAid KDTE704DSS	\$1,600	65	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	175	●	●	●		some	stainless-steel	●
	73	Bosch Ascenta DLX SHX4AT75UC	\$700	64	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	120	●	●	●		all	stainless/plastic	●
	74	Whirlpool WDL785SAAM	\$875	64	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	135	●	●	●		no	stainless-steel	●
	75	KitchenAid KDTE104DSS	\$810	63	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	135	●	●	●		some	stainless-steel	●
	76	Samsung DW7933LRA[SR]	\$600	62	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	150	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	77	Jenn-Air Trifecta JDB8200AW[S]	\$1,200	61	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	170	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	78	Frigidaire Professional FPHD2491K[F]	\$650	60	🔴	🟡	🟡	🔴	180	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	79	Electrolux Wave-Touch EW24ID80QS	\$1,100	60	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	200	●	●	●		no	stainless-steel	●
	80	Electrolux Wave-Touch EWDW6505G[S]	\$1,200	59	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	135	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	81	Jenn-Air JDB3200AW[W]	\$1,100	59	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	125	●		●		all	stainless-steel	●
	82	Frigidaire Gallery FGID2474QF	\$630	58	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	120	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	83	Frigidaire Gallery FGCD2456QF	\$680	58	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	120	●	●	●		no	stainless-steel	●
	84	Electrolux IQ-Touch EI24ID30QS	\$800	58	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	120	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	85	Electrolux IQ-Touch EI24ID50QS	\$1,000	57	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	120	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	86	Frigidaire Gallery FGBD2438PF	\$450	57	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	130						plastic	●
	87	Fagor LFA-086XL	\$1,300	55	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	120	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	88	Frigidaire Gallery FGBD2434PF	\$400	55	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	125					no	plastic	●
	89	Amana ADB1100AWW	\$300	54	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	160					no	plastic	
	90	Electrolux Icon EDW7505HP[S]	\$1,400	54	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	125	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	91	Summit DW2432SS	\$650	48	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	110	●	●	●		no	stainless-steel	●
	92	Haier DWL3225SD[SS]	\$500	45	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	120	●	●	●	●	no	stainless-steel	●
	93	Haier DWL7075MC[SS]	\$750	44	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	120	●	●	●	●	all	stainless-steel	●
	94	Fagor LFA75IT	\$700	43	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	135	●	●	●		all	stainless-steel	●
	95	Kenmore 15112	\$300	43	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	110					no	plastic	
	96	Ikea Renlig 802.222.43	\$500	43	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	120	●		●		no	plastic	●
	97	Hotpoint HDA3600DWW	\$380	38	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	110				●	no	plastic	
	98	Frigidaire FBD2400KS	\$310	34	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	90					no	plastic	●
	99	Amana ADB1400PY[S]	\$380	34	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡	115	●		●		no	plastic	

✓ CR Best Buy ✓ Recommended

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Most & least reliable brands

More than 70,000 owners sound off

DISHWASHERS

Bosch	9%	Maytag	15%
Whirlpool	10%	Frigidaire	16%
GE	13%	KitchenAid	18%
Miele	13%	LG	18%
Kenmore	14%	Samsung	24%

Source: Consumer Reports Annual Product Reliability Survey. Our findings are based on 70,000 dishwashers that consumers bought new between 2010 and 2014. Each rate represents the percentage of dishwashers that were repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 3 points aren't meaningful. Models within a brand may vary, and design and manufacture changes may affect future reliability.

Sinks

You don't have to spend a fortune on a model that will look great for years to come.



YOU'LL FIND A lot of options when you start shopping for a new sink, many of them at low prices. Good news: Saving doesn't mean sacrificing quality. Our tests indicated that price doesn't always indicate performance.

For months we stained, scoured, dropped objects, and put hot pots in 18 double-bowl

sinks. We compared thick, heavy-gauge stainless steel with thinner versions, and heavy cast iron with lightweight acrylic and trendy fireclay. We found that the manufacturer wasn't as important as the material, which is why the Ratings are listed by material. Here's what else:

A style with a rich finish, like the hammered style shown above, can lend texture and interest to your space. But it could be more difficult to clean.

DARREN SETLOW

Finish matters more than thickness. We tested 18- to 23-gauge stainless-steel sinks. (The lower the gauge, the thicker the steel.) Contrary to what some companies claim, we found that expensive, thicker-gauge stainless didn't hold up better than thinner versions. They all withstood stains. They also resisted heat and dings, though they did dent when we dropped a 5-pound weight—similar to a heavy pot—from a height of as little as 4 inches. Sound-absorbing pads on the sink's exterior bottom and sides minimized the noise of running water better than spray-on sound-insulating coatings. And sinks with polished or glossy surfaces showed scratches and stains more than those with matte finishes.

Color requires compromises. You can add color to your kitchen by choosing a solid surfacing, enameled steel, enameled cast iron, acrylic, or fireclay sink. But each material has a weakness. Almost all were damaged in our impact tests. Fireclay cracked after our toughest drop tests. The acrylic sinks didn't chip, but they did melt slightly when we "accidentally" left a hot pot in them. Solid-surfacing sinks fared only somewhat better.



How to choose

If you're keeping your current countertop and faucet, your new sink will need to match the old sink's cutout area and the number of faucet holes. Replacing all three? Keep these points in mind when shopping for a new sink:

Consider the style.

Drop-in sinks, also called top-mounts or self-rimming sinks, fit in the counter and can be used with any countertop material. They're often the least expensive option and the simplest to install.

Undermount sinks are installed beneath the counter and require waterproof countertop materials, such as stone or solid

surfacing. **Seamless installations**, where the sink and counter are made of the same material, have a nice, clean look. But because they're made as a unit, if the sink or counter is damaged, you'll have to replace both.

Apron-front (or farmhouse) sinks usually have a single deep basin with an exposed front. They usually require a

special sink cabinet, but now some Kohler sink models can be dropped into existing cabinets. **Tile-in sinks** have flat edges and square corners, and can be mounted at the same level as tile countertops.

Be sure it isn't too deep. Sinks are usually 6 to 12 inches deep. Deeper models reduce splashes, but it might be uncomfortable to reach the bottom. Remember that undermounted sinks will be up to 1 inch lower than a drop-in.

Pick a bowl.

Double-bowl sinks let you soak a pot in one bowl while

you rinse in the other. Just be sure that at least one of the bowls is wide enough to fit large pots or roasters. The easiest way to do that is to take one with you to the store. Or consider a double-bowl sink with one large bowl and a smaller one. A single large bowl might be better for smaller spaces. Rectangular-shaped sinks are standard. D-shaped bowls have a curved back and offer more space front to back. Rear drains provide for more usable storage space in the sink cabinet but will probably require additional plumbing.



Product guide

FARMHOUSE (APRON-FRONT) →

Best for many kitchen styles. Stainless-steel models work well with modern designs; copper or enameled cast iron suits a country style. It's usually a deep single bowl with the faucet installed in the counter or wall.

But farmhouse sinks are pricey and might require special cabinets. Plus water can drip onto the cabinet below, causing damage to the finish or even the wood.

Price \$900 to \$3,700



KOHLER

↑ TROUGH

Best for use as a prep or bar sink because it's long and narrow—from 8 to 14 inches wide and up to 50 inches long. Longer versions can be used by more than one person at a time.

But they're expensive and more fun than functional. And they might require custom cabinetry; typical sink cabinets aren't designed for such a long, narrow fixture.

Price \$500 to \$2,100



KOHLER



AMERICAN STANDARD

↓ UNDERMOUNT

Best for a sleek look and easy cleanup. You can wipe spills and crumbs from counters directly into the sink. Faucets are installed into the counter or mounted on a wall behind the sink.

But this type is usually more expensive and limited to waterproof solid-surface countertop materials, not laminate counters or most woods.

Price \$200 to \$1,000



FRANKE

← TOP-MOUNT (DROP-IN, SELF-RIMMING)

Best for a tight budget. It sits directly on top of the counter. Top-mounted sinks work with any countertop material and are the simplest type to install.

But grime tends to build up around the lip of the sink. And top-mounts can detract from the look of stone countertops.

Price \$100 to \$500

Material matters

Style is important, but the material your sink is made from could determine how well it performs, and lasts.

Stainless steel: More people buy stainless-steel kitchen sinks than any other type. Our tests showed that thicker gauge-steel isn't always better (see "Finish matters more than thickness," p. 127).

Enamel: Sold in two versions (enamel on cast iron or lighter, less expensive enamel on steel), enamel is available in many colors and is easy to clean. Our hot pot test didn't damage enamel, but when we dropped a 5-pound weight, similar to dropping a heavy pot, enamel-on-steel sinks chipped or cracked. Enamel on cast iron chipped when we dropped a sharp, light object, similar to a knife, on it. Damaged enamel can cause the metal underneath to rust.

Acrylic: It might look similar to enamel, but acrylic scratches more easily and heat can be damaging. Our hot pot melted the surface.



BLANCO

Solid surface: These sinks can be paired with counters made of the same material for a seamless look. In our tests, high heat and dropping a sharp, light object, similar to a knife, damaged solid surfacing.

Fireclay: This heavy, heat-cured clay comes in a wide range of colors. It withstood stains, scouring, and heat in our tests. But resisting chips and cracks from dropped objects was a challenge.



Tip

Several brands offer à la carte accessories—such as a drop-in cutting board—that can turn your sink into a multi-purpose prep and cleanup zone.

Ratings: All tested materials in performance order.

MATERIAL	PRICE	SCORE	RESISTS					
			Stains	Abrasion	Sharp Impact	Blunt Impact	Heat	Noise
Stainless steel	\$100-\$600	83	●	●	●	○	●	○
Solid surfacing	\$200-\$500	80	●	●	○	●	●	●
Enameled steel	\$100-\$350	77	●	●	●	●	●	●
Enameled cast iron	\$150-\$450	74	○	●	●	●	●	●
Acrylic	\$75-\$200	71	●	●	●	●	●	○
Fireclay	\$550-\$800	66	●	●	●	●	●	○

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

Guide to the Ratings

SCORE summarizes performance in all tests. **STAINS** shows resistance to 15 common foods and cleaning products. **ABRASION** reflects resistance to damage from nylon and metal scouring pads. Impact shows resistance to damage from blunt and sharp objects dropped from up to 20 inches. **HEAT** gauges resistance to damage from a pot filled with oil and heated to 400° F. **NOISE** is based on sound transmission from a stream of water and the impact of a sharp metal object. Our tests for sink and countertop materials are different, which is why the scores of materials may vary. **PRICE** is approximate retail.

Faucets

The best kitchen faucets boast dripless construction and durable finishes.



HANSGRÖHE
AXOR CITTERIO
SEMI-PRO

LEAKS COULD BE a thing of the past with top-notch valves and tough finishes now common on all but the cheapest faucets. Most models also have lifetime warranties (for the original buyer) that cover defects and even finishes. We found few performance differences between brands and that's why our advice is based on finish, not faucet.

The most durable finishes in our tests were created with a process called physical vapor deposition or PVD. In this finishing method, the exterior of the faucet is bombarded with charged metal atoms that

chemically bond to the surface of the base metal. PVD finishes resisted our best attempts at scratching them, but corrosives such as drain cleaner can stain them slightly.

Different base metals impart different finishes, including nickel and bronze. Chrome remains a popular finish and is pretty durable, but a heavy-duty scouring pad can scratch it. Brushed stainless didn't show scratches or stains as easily as chrome. Bronze offers a rustic look, but the one without the PVD finish was the least resistant in our abrasion tests. A bronze faucet with the PVD finish was fine.

How to choose

Consider spout style and faucet function.

Straight-spout models are compact and often inexpensive, but you might need to move the faucet to fit a big pot under it. Gooseneck models have higher clearances but can cause splashing if your sink is shallow.

No matter which type you pick, make sure the faucet head swings far enough to reach the entire interior of the sink. Also choose a faucet that is proportional to the size of the sink.

Match your sink holes.

Most sinks come with mounting holes drilled for faucets. If you aren't changing sinks, you'll need to match what you have or get a base plate to cover extra holes. The base plate can also be used to cover holes in your countertop, if that's where your faucet will be installed.

Factor in installation.

Replacing a faucet and sink together is simpler because the faucet can be installed before the sink is put in place. Fittings you can simply tighten with a screwdriver also streamline the job. Long hoses allow for connections lower in the sink cabinet, where tools are easier to use.



KOHLER PURIST BRIDGE
KITCHEN FAUCET

TWO SEPARATE HANDLES

This traditional faucet setup has hot and cold handles to either side of the spout.

Pros: Two handles might allow you to make slightly more precise temperature adjustments than a single lever allows.

This style typically has a traditional look, though contemporary styles are available.

Cons: A faucet with two separate handles can be less convenient to use if your hands aren't clean and you're trying not to soil the handles.

Product guide

There are two main types of faucets: single lever and two-handled. If you are replacing an older faucet, your choice might be limited to the configuration of your current sink or counter. But if you are buying a new sink and faucet at the same time, you'll have to decide. Here are the pros and cons of each:

SINGLE LEVER

You move the lever to one side or the other for hot or cold water, or somewhere midway to mix it. Some faucets have a spout on a retractable hose—referred to as a pull-out faucet.

Pros: Single-lever faucets can be easier to install than two-handled models and they can take up less counter space. They're more convenient if your hands aren't clean and you don't want to get the handle dirty.

Cons: Those with side-mounted levers might have less clearance from the backsplash, making it more likely for you to bang your knuckles as you turn the handle. Side-mounted levers can be more difficult to use if your hands are dirty.



BLANCO ALTA COMPACT

Details that count

1. SINGLE LEVER

It mixes hot and cold water, and takes up less room than dual-handled models. Those that can be turned off without losing the last temperature setting are better than models that require you to reset the temperature every time you turn on the faucet.

2. SPRAY/STREAM SELECTOR

Finger-friendly buttons on the side or top of the spray head allow you to easily go from spray to stream. Best are those that stay in the last chosen mode even after you turn the water off.

3. PVD FINISH

A physical vapor deposition finish is scratch-resistant, though some staining can occur. It is available in nickel, copper, pewter, bronze, gold, and polished brass.

4. PULL-OUT SPOUT

This combines a spout and a spray head with a swivel that increases the hose's flexibility. Hoses should be long enough to reach around and into the corners of the sink.

5. BASE PLATE

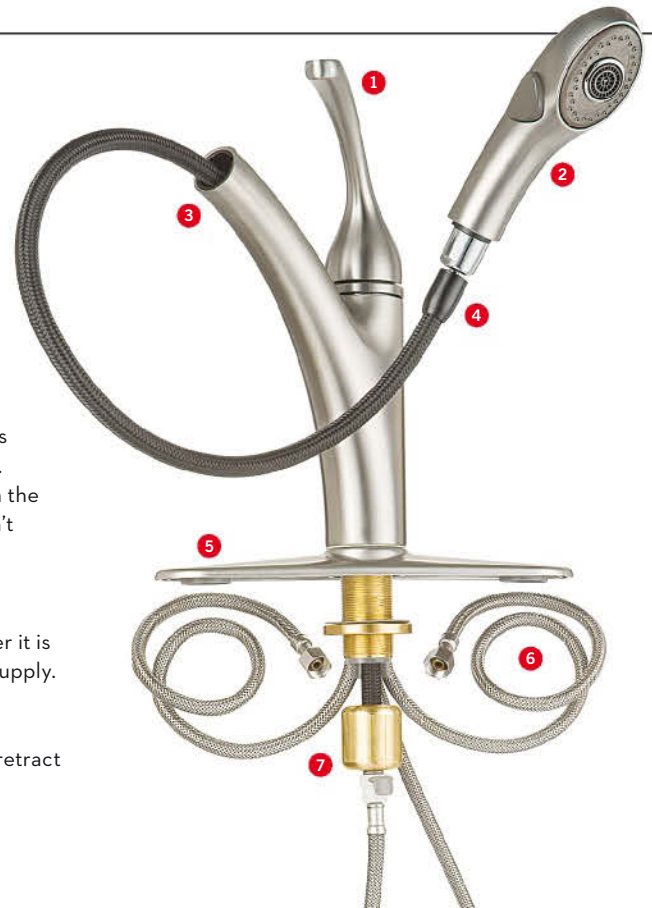
It covers any unnecessary holes in your existing sink or counter. If you're buying a new sink with the right number of holes, you won't need one.

6. SUPPLY HOSES

The longer the hoses, the easier it is to connect them to the water supply.

7. COUNTERWEIGHT

This helps the hose and spout retract properly after release.



SHOPPING FOR APPLIANCES

Over 20,000 readers of *Consumer Reports* share their experiences on the best (and worst) places to buy appliances.



HERE'S A SURPRISING TIDBIT: The stores that sell the most appliances in the U.S.—Home Depot, Lowe's, Sears, and Walmart—aren't necessarily the ones customers like best. Our latest survey of more than 22,000 readers shows that *amazon.com* and local independent retailers meet or beat the big boys on selection and service.

Savvy shoppers rated Chicago-area Abt Electronics best overall for large appliances for the fourth year. Don't live near the Windy City? Abt

ships anywhere within the lower 48 states and sells online from its site and on Amazon.

Online buying is growing fast—est for small appliances: Roughly 25 percent were bought that way in 2013 compared with 16 percent in 2012. *Amazon.com* topped most small-appliance retailers and outdid *QVC.com* for selection. Relatively low prices for both online retailers and better service this year from Amazon are probably part of that strong showing. Here's

how the stores rate on price, selection, and service based on almost 30,000 purchases.

Lowest prices: Think Best Buy and Costco. Big-box stores such as Home Depot and Lowe's offer one-stop shopping if you're buying lumber along with your fridge. But when it comes to the best deals, Best Buy beat them and matched both Abt Electronics and a regional player, HHGregg. Shopping for smaller stuff? No one matched Costco on price; the warehouse club beat Sam's Club, *amazon.com*, and *QVC.com*.

Best selection: Hit Abt, HHGregg, and Pacific Sales. For variety, none of the largest chains matched those three regional retailers for large appliances or *amazon.com* for small ones. But if you want to buy food with your food processor, you'll find more choices at Target than at Costco, Sam's Club, or Walmart.

Service and easy checkout: Shop the locals. It's hard to beat your neighborhood mom-and-pop retailer if you want attentive, knowledgeable salespeople. And when it comes to small appliances, our shoppers gave Kmart, Sam's Club, Target, and Walmart our lowest marks for service. Complaints included inexperienced, hard-to-find sales help. Hate long checkout waits? Then consider skipping Sears.

GETTY IMAGES; DAVID PATTERSON/LISA EGGER ARCHITECT

SHOPPING TIPS

Haggle. Shoppers who asked for a lower price on a purchase typically saved \$100 on major appliances and \$50 on small

ones. Here's a winning tactic from one of our Facebook followers: See whether you can buy a floor model or one that's slightly blemished (but fully functional) for less. And try to

get any fees for shipping, installation, and haul-away waived.

Skip extended warranties.

Eighty-five percent of our large-appliance shoppers were encouraged to buy one;

P.C. Richard & Son, a New York-area regional chain, proved to be the pushiest. But our research shows that repairs during the extended-warranty period often cost about the same as the

Boutique shopping...for appliances

Yes, you can buy a \$5,000 range at a big box store, or online, for that matter. But when you're making a sizeable investment in a kitchenful of appliances you might want a bit more personalized attention and expertise than a general retailer can offer. If so, consider shopping at an independent appliance store that specializes in high-end products. Often family-owned and -operated, these stores have a limited product line, which their sales staff typically knows inside and out—thanks to regular and ongoing training from the manufacturers whose products they sell. “Every day, we have sales reps from different companies come into our store to give our staff on-the-spot training sessions. If there's a new product, they'll walk us through every feature,” says Stephen Weiner, sales manager at Abt Electronics in Glenview, Ill.

That level of knowledge ensures that a salesperson can offer advice and help shoppers avoid potentially expensive mistakes. Weiner adds that the benefits of working with a high-end retailer don't stop once the appliance is purchased, though. His store—and others like his—offer ongoing service and maintenance, so you will be building a relationship with the retailer that could last the life of the appliance.



Abt Electronics' showroom boasts a Las Vegas-inspired atrium (above) and kitchen vignettes (below).



Best all-around choices from our survey

Shoppers were relatively satisfied overall, but no retailer earned perfect marks across the board.

ABT ELECTRONICS

This Chicago-area store boasts an 80,000-square-foot showroom. It was the highest-rated store overall for sales of major appliances. Consumer Reports readers who responded to our survey praised it for the very good prices and excellent selection, service, quality, and other attributes.

INDEPENDENTS

Stand-alone retailers received some of the highest scores for major and small appliances. While only average for price and selection, the stores received top marks for service, checkout ease, installation, and other attributes.

AMAZON.COM

This large online retailer was among the top ones overall for small appliances. People who bought them there praised it for prices, selection, service, checkout ease, and shipping.

QVC.COM

The website for this TV shopping channel received above-average scores for prices among buyers of small appliances. It also scored well for product quality, service, and shipping, among other attributes.

COSTCO

This popular warehouse club scored excellent for small-appliance prices and was praised for its product quality and checkout ease. As with other warehouse clubs, you sacrifice selection and service for price.

warranty. Here's a better bet: Check our brand-repair Ratings, starting on p. 44. **Compare prices online.** Most shoppers who checked prices before buying online or

at a brick-and-mortar store got a better deal overall. Taking advantage of online coupons and e-mail offers also helped them save. **Shop at a 'real' store.** One in

three shoppers who bought a major appliance online checked it out at a walk-in store first—and then saved roughly \$75, on average. But don't rule out walk-in stores when it comes

to buying: All of the major ones in our survey offer “meet or beat” price policies. Stores may also sweeten the deal in other ways (including free shipping and installation).

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Some companies excel at handling appliance woes, but many leave customers hanging in automated phone-menu limbo or worse.



NEED HELP? GOOD luck. More and more, retailers are burying their phone numbers deep in their web pages and steering you to online FAQs. It's all about saving money—theirs, not yours.

Although recorded messages insist “your call is very important to us,” we’ve found that many companies are driving a wedge between themselves and their customers through poor use of technology and inadequate training of staff.

In a nationwide survey, shoppers told us what they dislike most about today’s brand of care. We also crunched the numbers from our studies of 21 industries to identify the companies that were best and worst for customer service. And we asked retail experts for advice about the most effective ways to lodge a complaint. Here are the high points of our findings.

Frustration runs high. Sixty-four percent of our survey respondents said that during the previous 12 months they had left a store because service was poor, and 67 percent had hung up on customer service without having had their problem addressed.

Most callers want to reach an actual person. Seventy-one percent of survey respondents were “tremendously annoyed” when they couldn’t reach a human on the phone; 65 percent felt that same way about rude salespeople. And 56 percent felt that way about having to take multiple phone steps to reach the right place.

Differences in demographics become apparent. Our survey showed that women were more annoyed than men when they

couldn’t reach a person by phone; men were especially annoyed by customer-service phone reps who pitched unrelated goods or services; people 50 and older were more annoyed than others by convoluted voice-messaging systems.

Face-to-face is out of favor. Only 16 percent of Americans prefer to deal with a customer-service problem in person; 20 percent favor the phone; 2 percent, live chat. Fewer still prefer e-mail. Sixty percent of respondents said that their preferred method of contact depends on the nature of the problem.

Walmart and Sam’s Club win the booty prize. One or both were among the worst for customer service in eight industries, including appliances, electronics, cell phones, and supermarkets.

Getting results: How to rattle a company's cage

Sixty-one percent of Americans surveyed for an Arizona State University study said that complaining about a product or service was not worthwhile. But if you're not among that group, take advantage of the new tools consumers can use to express themselves. Internet forums can turn one person's headache into a corporate migraine. Most companies are on social networking sites so that they can monitor what's said about them—and they often respond to a concern before it can go viral. Bad news travels fast. According to the study, each dissatisfied complainant spreads the word to an average of about 18 people.

"Twitter has become the go-to for customer support," said Marsha Collier, author of "The Ultimate Online Customer Service Guide" (Wiley, 2011). "Some brands respond in seconds."

Some businesses are giving consumers a wider range of ways to reach them, offering toll-free numbers, e-mail query forms, and live chats with agents. Others have user communities, where they encourage customers to post questions and comments about their goods and services. Company representatives may even join the chat.

Dedicated sites like Yelp, which let customers rate businesses and sound off about experiences, are another option. Here are more ways to solve a problem.



MAKE YOUR PITCH IN PERSON. "On the phone, we use only 45 percent of the communication tools we use in person," customer-service expert Emily Yellin said. Missing are subtleties that break down barriers—a smile or tone of voice.

BYPASS AUTOMATED MENUS.

Websites such as *DialAHuman.com* and *GetHuman.com* list customer-service numbers and tell how to bypass automated prompts to reach a person. Another free service, LucyPhone, lets you avoid long waits on hold. You enter the company's name or phone number and give LucyPhone your phone number, and the service calls you back when a live representative is on the line.

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY. Yours might be one of 100 requests a rep handles in a day. Getting mad won't help.

KEEP A RECORD. Note when you called, the name and location of everyone you spoke with, how many times you were put on hold, and the responses you received. That way, if you need to follow up, you can say, "I spoke to John in your Chicago office at 12:20 and after a 30-minute wait he said he never heard of a problem like mine."

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL. If you get the runaround, tell the agent you want to "escalate" the status of your complaint. That's a guaranteed attention grabber because agents can be criticized for bumping too many problems upstairs.

CONTACT THE CEO'S OFFICE. "They want the problem solved before it reaches them," said Shep Hyken, a consultant who speaks to corporations about service. But when top execs hear from an unhappy consumer, they'll often ensure a response.

BE PERSISTENT. Repeat your story on social networking sites, if necessary. Companies can hide your comments on Facebook but not on Twitter. On Twitter, use hashtags for easy searchability.

GIVE PRAISE. Thank a company for a good outcome, especially if you've griped publicly. And always be polite.

Who provides the best support?

Subscribers who reported on experiences with more than 21,000 appliances were much more satisfied when they called an independent repair shop than they were with major manufacturers or chain retailers. The reports involved appliances serviced between January 2011 and June 2012, and were overwhelmingly based on products Consumer Reports subscribers had purchased new themselves.

Though satisfaction was higher for independent repair shops, a majority of the big name companies we rated got average scores for solving customers' problems. LG, however, was below average, and Frigidaire, Maytag, and Whirlpool got our lowest rating. Refrigerators and washing machines together accounted for about half of all appliances serviced.

Ratings

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor

In order of reader score for support satisfaction.

COMPANY	READER SCORE	SURVEY RESULTS	
		Solved problem	Phone support
Independent local repair shop	82	○	—
Independent local retail store	76	○	●
Lowe's	71	○	○
Sears	69	○	●
Kenmore	68	○	○
GE	66	○	○
Samsung	65	○	●
Frigidaire	64	●	●
Maytag	63	●	●
KitchenAid	61	○	●
Whirlpool	61	●	●
LG	61	●	●

SOURCE: Spring 2012 Appliance Support and Service survey. Differences of less than 7 points are not meaningful. **Reader score** reflects overall satisfaction with the service experience. **Solved problem** indicates whether the problem was solved by the company's support or repair service.

5 SURPRISING KITCHEN FIXES

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 p. 9, Amie Corley Interiors, amiecorley.com
 p. 10, Bondi blue glass tile backsplash by Oceanside Glasstile, glasstile.com
 p. 11, top, LDa Architecture & Interiors, lda-architects.com; bottom, Michelle Fries/BeDe Design, bededesign.com

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- p. 12, Zero Energy Design, zeroenergy.com;
 p. 14, Olympic Paints Ivory Tower, olympic.com
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- p. 16, 17 & 18, Cheryl Kees Clendenon indetailinteriors.com
 p. 20, Brooke Jones Design, modern-sophisticate.blogspot.com
 p. 21 top, Dalia Kitchen Design, porcelanosa-usa.com; bottom, Robert Zebrowski CKD, Extraordinary Works, ewkitchens.com/robert-zebrowski.html

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- p. 24 top left, Ron Brenner Architects, ronbrennerarchitects.com; top right, Abigail Campbell-King Architect, abbyarch.com;
 bottom left, Douglas Larson, Larson and Paul Architects, larsonandpaul.com, interior by Selina van der Geest, nlgb.com;
 bottom right, Noel Dempsey Design, noeldempsey.com
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 bottom, Urban Grace Interiors, urbangrace.com; Geoff Chick & Associates Architecture, geoffchick.com
 p. 26 left, LDa Architecture & Interiors, lda-architects.com; lower right, Bear Hill Interiors, bearhillinteriors.com
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 p. 51 bottom, TerraCotta Properties, terracottaproperties.com

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 p. 60, bottom, Apex Hardwood Floors, Live Sawn White Oak in Chestnut stain, apexwoodfloors.com

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 p. 112 top, Jessica DeKler/Deakins Design Group, deakinsdesigngroup.com; bottom left, Leslie Ann Abbott, Interior Design; linkedin.com/in/lesliannabbott, bottom right, Blake Shaw Homes, blakeshawhomes.com

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- p. 127 top, Rohl Waterside Apron-front Fireclay sink, rohlhome.com; bottom Blanco Precision Microedge, blanco-germany.com
 p. 128 top left, Kohler Trough, kohler.com; top right, American Standard Orchard, americanstandard.com; bottom left, Kohler Overmount, kohler.com; bottom right, Franke Oceania, franke.com
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- p. 130, Lucy Earl/Jones Keena Interiors, jones-keena.com

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